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HOUSE & GARDEN

JANUARY 1989
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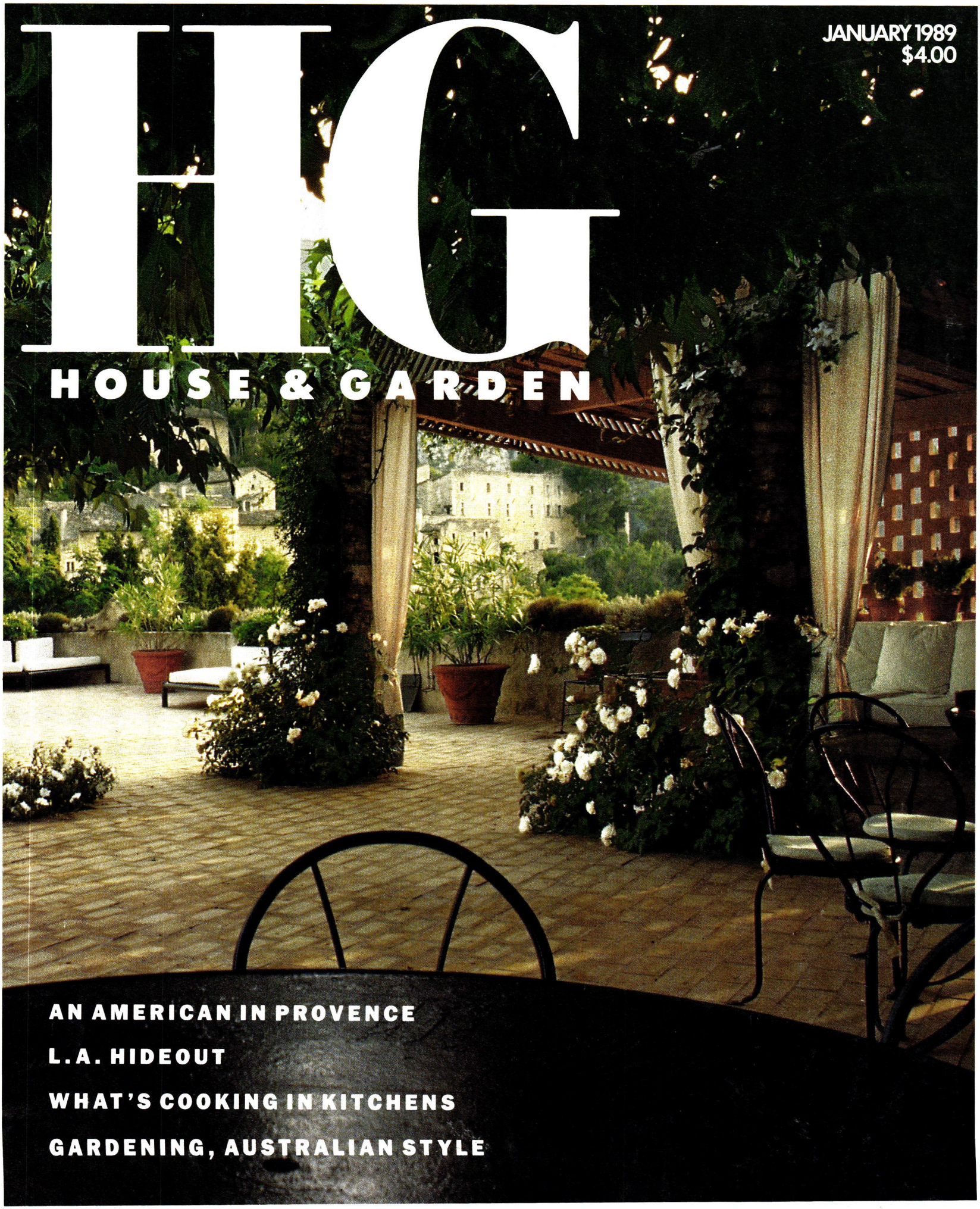
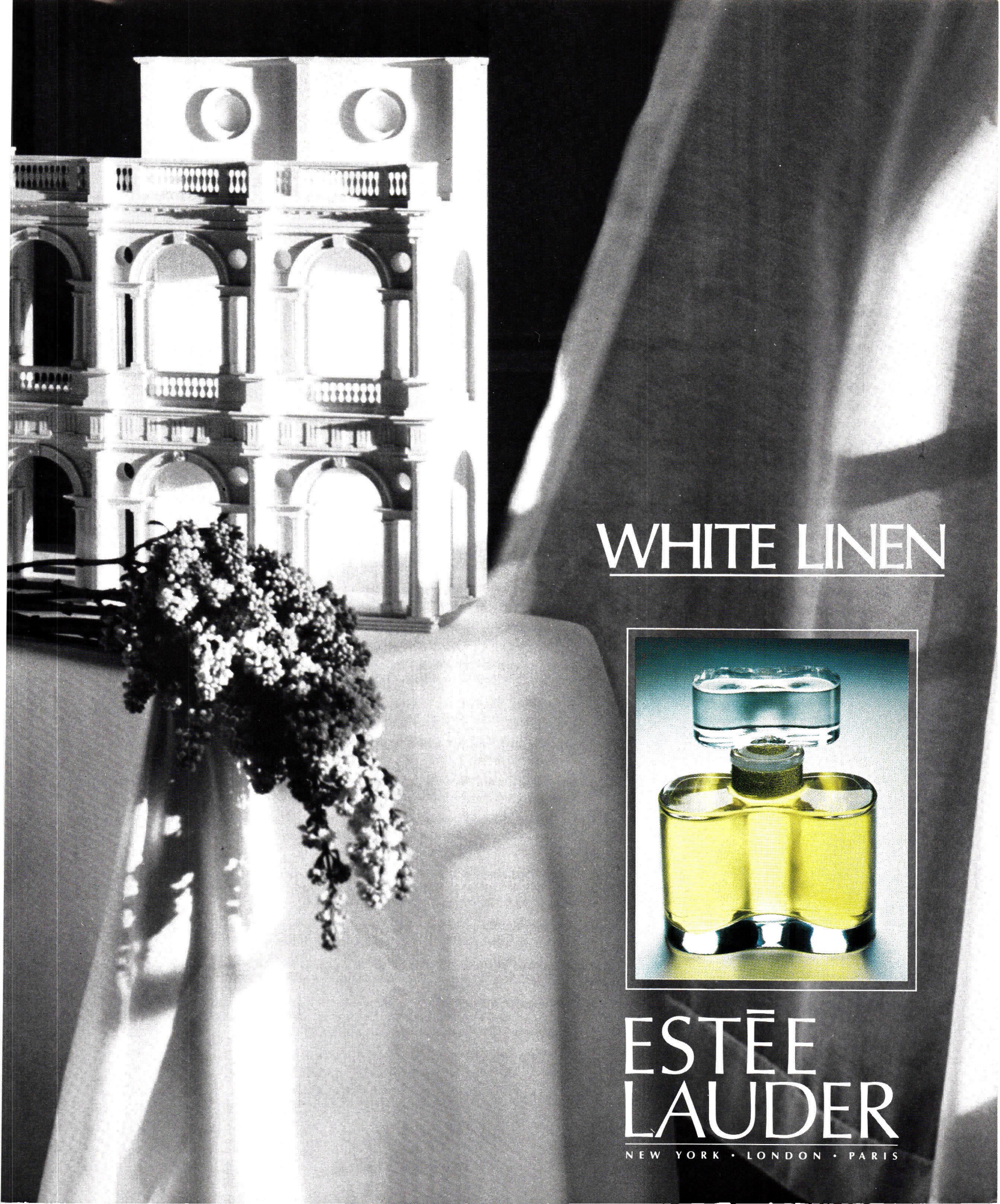


AN AMERICAN IN PROVENCE

L.A. HIDEOUT

WHAT'S COOKING IN KITCHENS

GARDENING, AUSTRALIAN STYLE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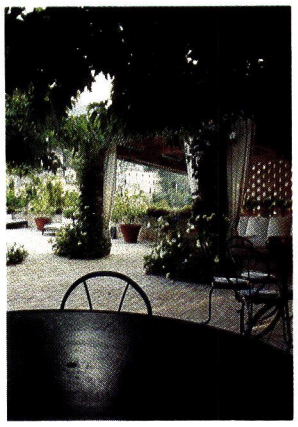
Volume 161, Number 1



COVER
The terrace of Dick Dumas's *maison* in Provence—once the local café. Page 98. Photograph by François Halard.

Contributors Notes 12
Notes 15
HG People *by Edmund White* **22**
Style *by Amicia de Moubray* **28**
Design *by Stuart Greenspan* **30**
Travel *by Cynthia Gorney* **34**
Art *by Kenneth Baker* **38**
Food *by Jeffrey Steingarten* **42**
Antiques *by Margot Guralnick* **46**
Architecture *by Martin Filler* **48**
Taste *by Herbert Muschamp* **50**
Classics *by Martin Filler* **52**
Collecting *by Rhoda Koenig* **54**
Workroom *by Heather Smith MacIsaac* **56**
Editor's Page *by Nancy Novogrod* **59**
Samples 138
Salesroom *by Sam Pennington* **140**
Real Estate *by Meg Lukens* **142**
Sources *Where to Find It* **153**
Gandee at Large *by Charles Gandee* **154**

An antique marble wellhead centers Liz Mezzacappa's perennial garden in Southampton. Page 82. Photograph by Lizzie Himmel.

Vass Horizons "The world abounds with wonderful stuff," says fashion designer Joan Vass. Jonathan Etra visits her loft and sees what she means **60**

The Royalton Treatment Charles Gandee checks in to the hippest new hotel in Manhattan **70**

Gentleman's Quarters Tom Fallon wanted his place to feel like "an old school pal." And it does, says Mary Cantwell **78**

Hampton Classic Designer Deborah Nevins helps Liz Mezzacappa turn Long Island fields into rather an English garden. By Katherine Whiteside **82**

Chef's Special Two young architects throw away the recipe for the model kitchen. By Heather Smith MacIsaac **90**

On Audubon Place In laid-back New Orleans, decorator Ann Holden updates a formerly brooding Victorian house. By Nancy McKeon **94**

In the Light of Provence American designer Dick Dumas moved to a twelfth-century village in the south of France, bought the local café, and turned it into his *maison*. By Dodie Kazanjian **98**

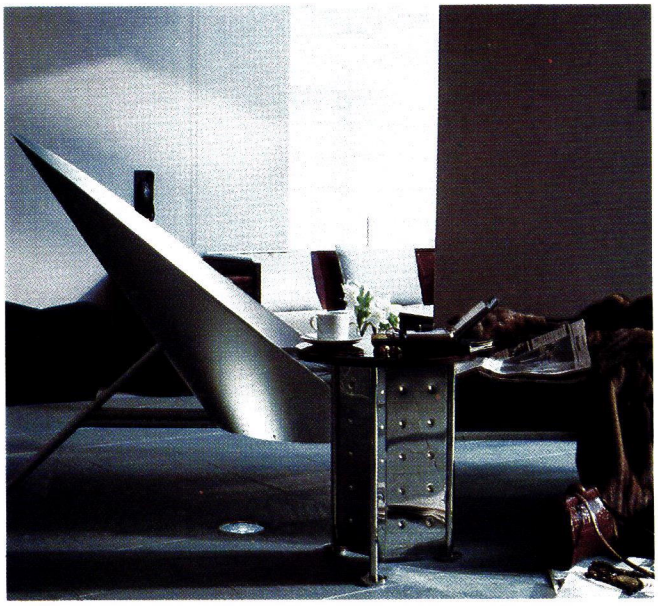
Sam Wagstaff's Silver He was a renegade collector who amassed an extraordinary cache of American Victorian silver—some of which he carried around in his pocket, as Ingrid Sischy remembers **108**

Roman Revival Adriano Magistretti transformed a sixteenth-century orangery into a one-room palazzo. By Jonathan Turner **114**

Canyon Hideout When Ned Tanen wraps up each day in Hollywood, he heads home to a few thousand of his favorite things. Pilar Viladas takes inventory **120**

Out Back in Australia A wild and rambling garden behind a tiny nineteenth-century cottage outside Melbourne is Graham and Vicki Geddes's weekend escape—and obsession. By Deborah Bartlett Pitt **126**

Playing with Fire A coat of paint, a bolt of fabric, a few well-chosen objects spruce up the humble hearth. HG takes on the mantel **132**



In the penthouse of Manhattan's hippest new hotel, the Royalton. Page 70. Photograph by Michael Mundy.

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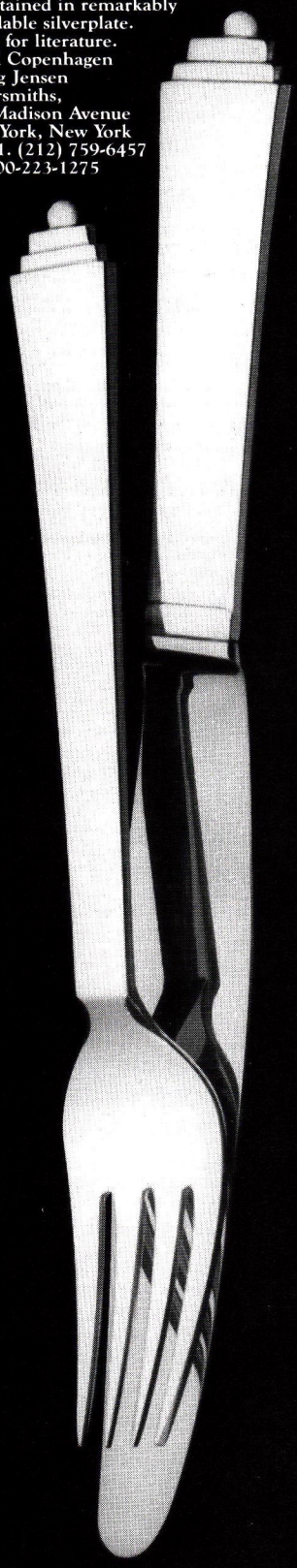

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PURVEYOR TO HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN OF DENMARK

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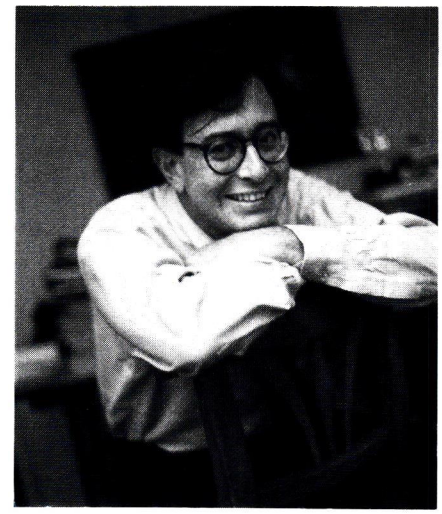
RUTH ANSEL
"I'd like the pages of today's HG to reflect a very personal, subjective sense of individual style," says design director Ruth Ansel. "I'm fascinated with how people will be living in the nineties—in anything from tents to triplexes. The challenge at HG is to redefine our attitudes toward our surroundings—both the reality and the fantasy." Ansel's designing eye has directed publications such as *The New York Times Magazine*, *Vanity Fair* (where she established its current look), *Vogue*, and at *House & Garden* six years ago where she introduced readers to the innovative talents of photographers Oberto Gili, François Halard, and Evelyn Hofer.



JACKIE NICKERSON

STUART GREENSPAN
"I would love to sit on Iran's Peacock Throne, although I don't think it looks very comfortable," says Stuart Greenspan after an exhaustive search for the eleven most uncomfortable chairs for this month's Design column. Greenspan frequently writes—while sitting in a cozy desk chair—on the art market for *The New York Observer* and *Art & Auction*.

INGRID SISCHY
"To tell you the truth, I never thought about American silver until Sam Wagstaff couldn't stop talking about it. What he showed me made me want to see more," says Ingrid Sischy, who wrote about Wagstaff and his collection for this issue. A former editor in chief of *Artforum*, Sischy is now a consulting editor at HG. "Discovering art can happen when you least expect it. It's not always something that occurs in a museum," she says—as illustrated in this month's Art column, Artists in Residences.

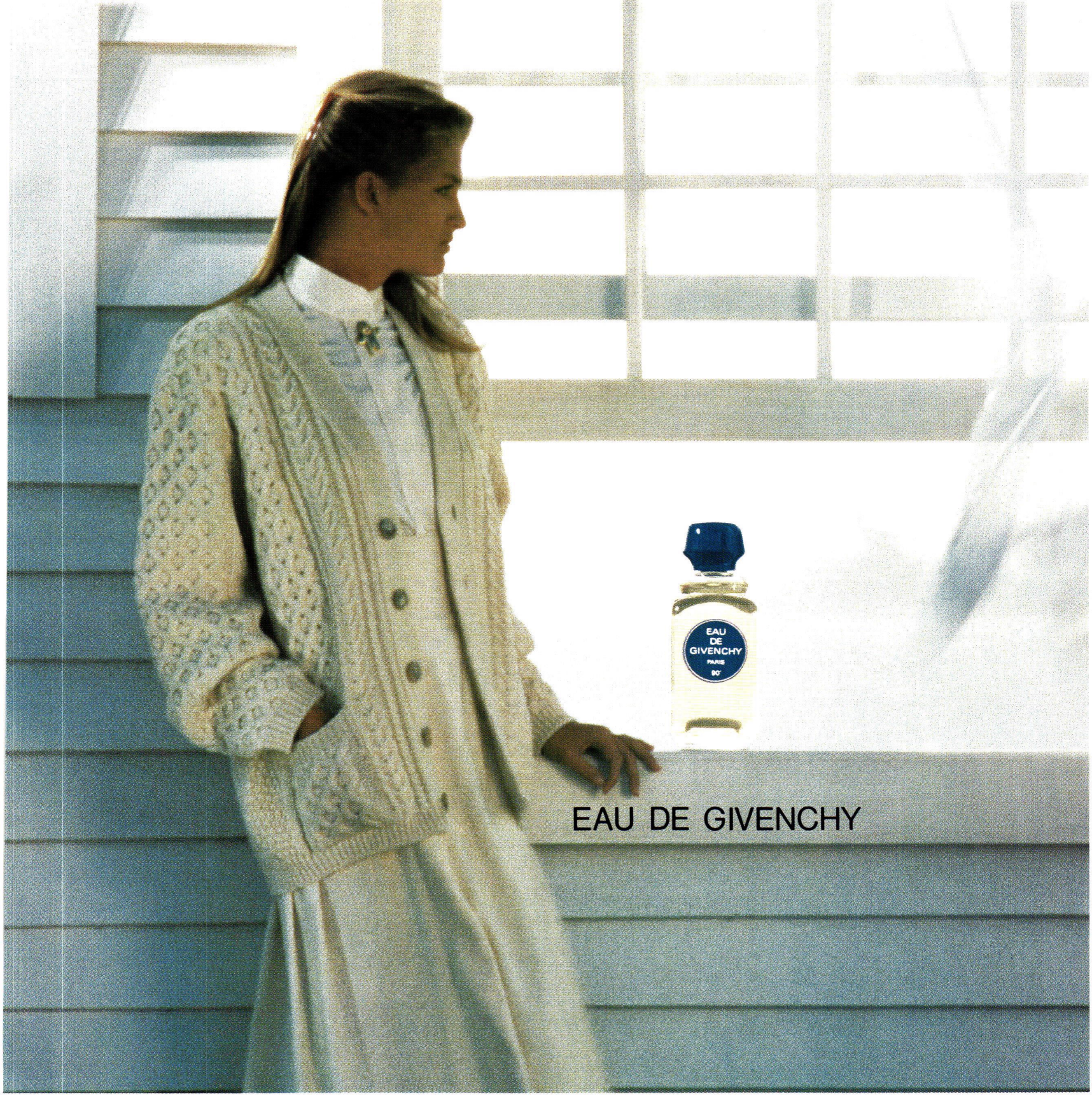
CHRISTOPHER MAKOS

JOYCE RAVID

LIZZIE HIMMEL
Photographer Lizzie Himmel spent childhood summers in a garden on New York's Fire Island, where her mother "tried to plant on bare sand." Now a gardener herself, she grows things her cats can eat, but her primary contact with the outdoors is through a camera lens. This month she captures the Mezzacappa garden in Southampton.

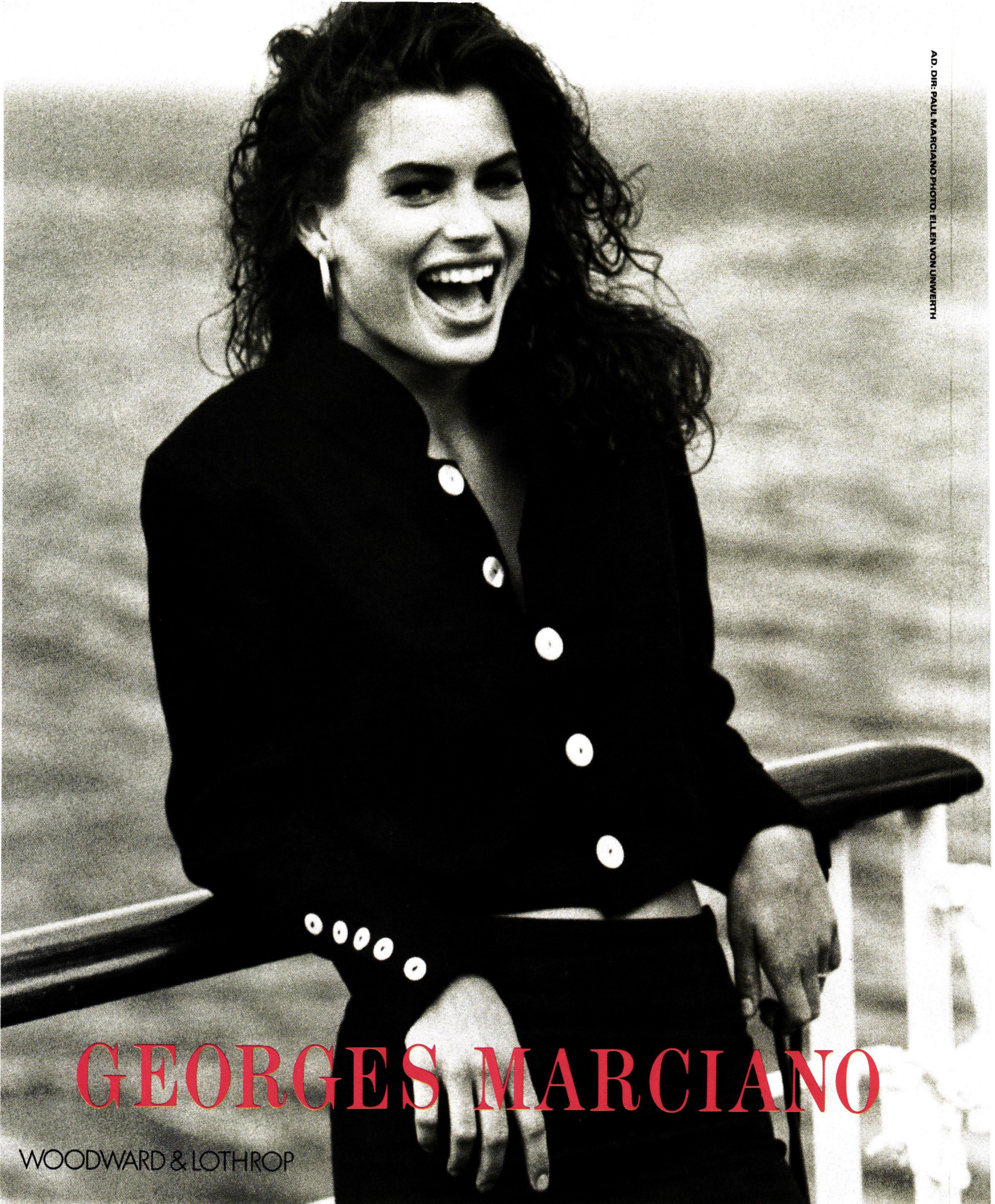
MICK HALES

KATHERINE WHITESIDE
"It's fun to analyze how and why a garden works," says writer Katherine Whiteside, who does just that for the Mezzacappa garden. "It's not just the plants or the location but also the expertise of the designer and the personality of the owner." Whiteside contributes to a number of magazines and her first book, *Antique Flowers*, in collaboration with photographer Mick Hales, has just been published by Villard Books.



GIVENCHY

ROBINSON'S FAMOUS·BARR Burdines THE FLORIDA STORE



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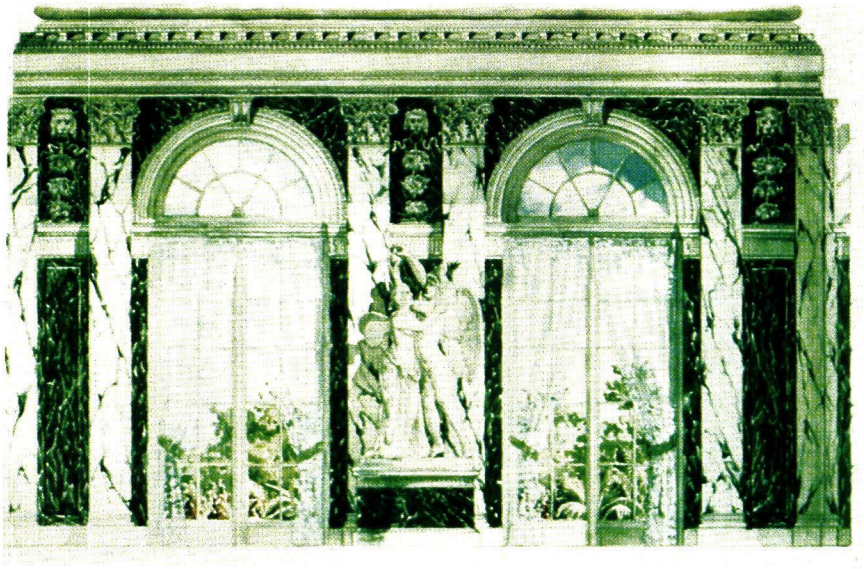

CLASSICS REVISITED

Tastemaker to nouvelle society in the 1890s, Ogden Codman cleared away the heavy tassels, embroidered velvet, and gaudy molding of Gilded Age interiors and replaced them with the cool lines of eighteenth-century European classicism. His book, *The Decoration of Houses*, written with Edith Wharton, became the definitive practical guide to classic style. Now the exhibition "Ogden Codman and the Decoration of Houses" is on view at New York's National Academy of Design, through January 29.

Lighting Rods

The Light Ray! is an illuminating new take on a familiar idea—track lighting. A trio of halogen lamps on 18-inch telescopic arms ride a 6-foot rail; the trick is in the flexible tubing, which twists and curves whenever the lights are moved, $1,000. From GEO International, International Design Center, 30–20 Thompson Ave., Long Island City, NY 11101; (718) 786-3232.

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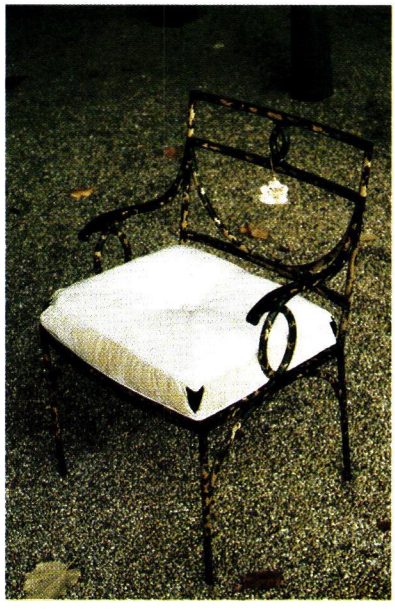


FINISHING TOUCH

Is this the real turtle or merely the mock? After four years of fine tuning, Washington, D.C., designer Griffin Gould unveiled a faux tortoise chair hand-built from cold-rolled steel and layered with forty coats of oil pigment for the "most elusive faux finish." Chairs to order, beginning at $10,200, from Griffin Gould, Inc. (202) 333-3998.

SHARP DRESSER

Los Angeles artist Annie Kelly's usable sculpture is a funky tribute to Cubism. In the dressing table here, apples and oranges reminiscent of Cézanne's or Juan Gris's break up the piece's boxy lines. The result is a clever multiple-perspective painting in 3-D. Available through the Gallery of Functional Art, 2429 Main St., Santa Monica, CA 90405; (213) 450-2827.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: COURTESY GEO INTERNATIONAL; TIM STREET-PORTER; RUVEN AFANADOR; COURTESY METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

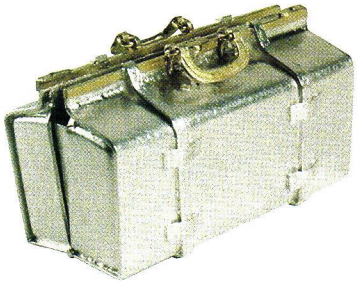
NOTES

PALLADIO FOR SALE

Built in 1554 for a Venetian admiral and his family, the Villa Cornaro in Piombino Dese, Italy, is one of the nineteen buildings by architect Andrea Palladio which still stands. An American professor and his wife spent the past seventeen years restoring and furnishing the house, and now that their work is complete, they have put the villa on the market. "We are treating this great home like a work of Renaissance art, which is truly what it is," reports Sotheby's John Prince, who isn't just indulging in Realtor hype. It comes with 114 frescoes by Mattia Bortoloni and six oversize statues of the Cornaro family by Camillo Mariani. Sotheby's has set a "price guide" of $2.5–$3 million.

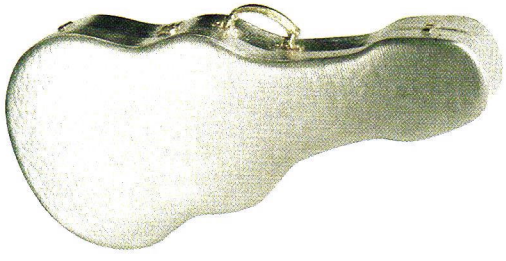
FENDI FURNITURE

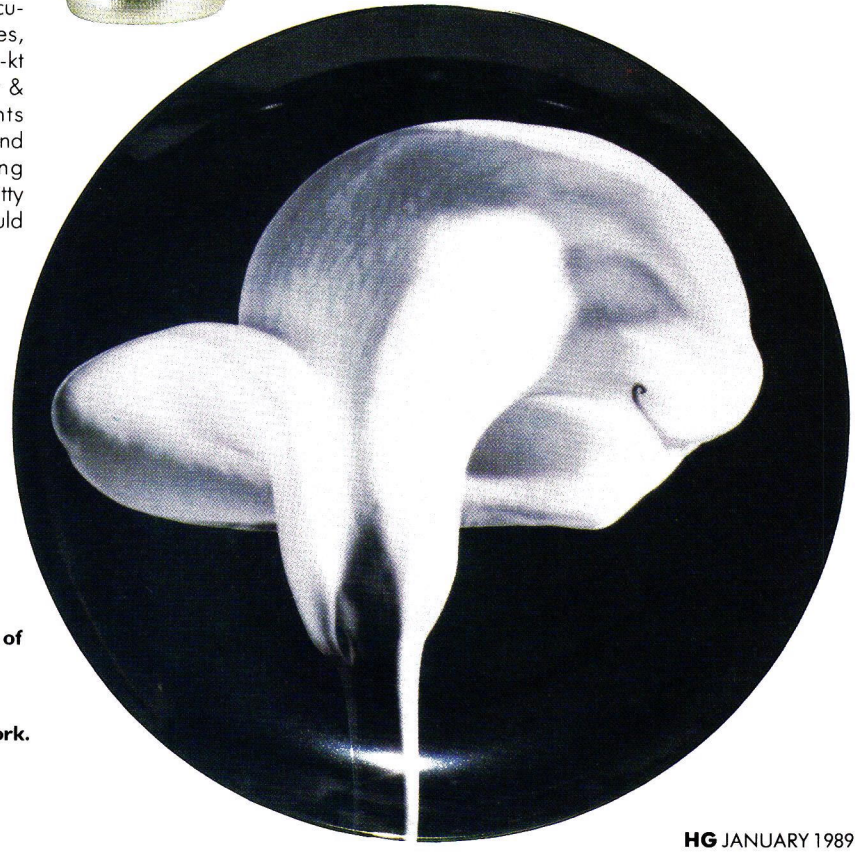
When the Fendi sisters decided to try their hands at furniture, inspiration came from the clothes that bear their famous imprint. Using their own rich textiles, they designed a line of chairs, tables, and sofas that is as classic as their fashions. At Fendi, Via Borgognona 39, Rome.



Small Pleasures

A childhood spent traipsing around the world with his parents inspired British jewelry designer Theo Fennell's latest collection of miniatures. New in the United States, these meticulously handcrafted pillboxes, made of sterling silver and 18-kt gold, start at $610 at Tiffany & Co., New York. With clients ranging from royals to rock and rollers, Fennell is attracting widespread acclaim for his witty little designs. Your bags should not be packed without them.





FLOWERS FOR DINNER

Graphic porcelain serving plates, each spotlighting one of photographer Robert Mapplethorpe's black-and-white blossoms—a calla lily, an orchid—are a new twist on traditional floral dinnerware, from Swid Powell, New York.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY SOTHEBY'S INTERNATIONAL REALTY; COURTESY FENDI, ROME; CARLOS NUÑEZ (6)

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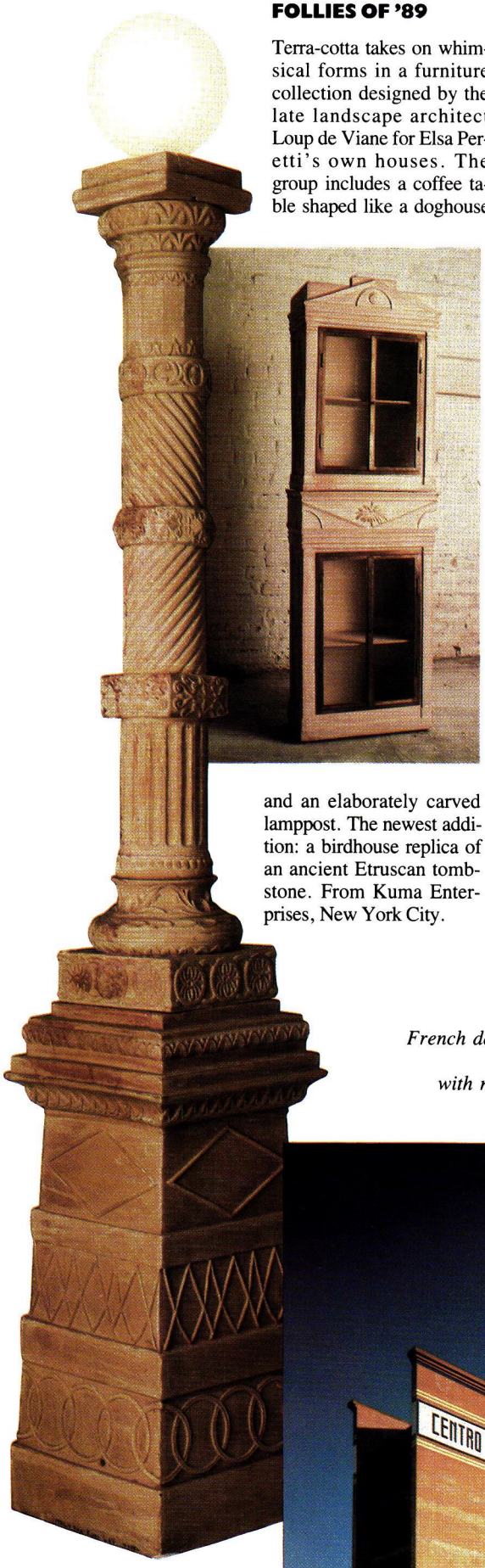
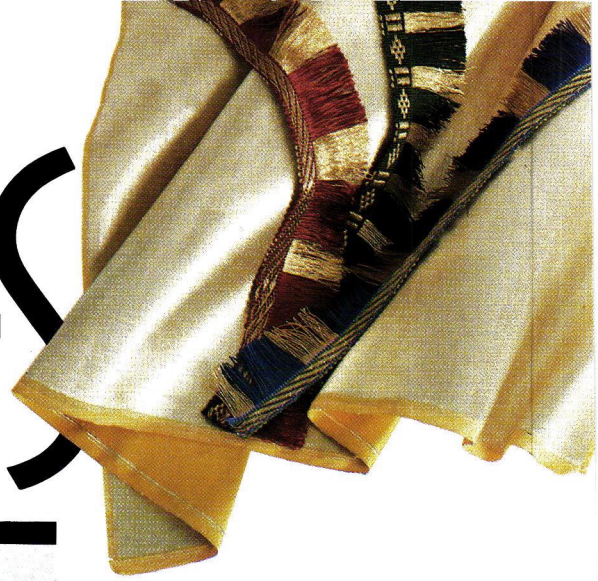


FOLLIES OF '89

Terra-cotta takes on whimsical forms in a furniture collection designed by the late landscape architect Loup de Viane for Elsa Peretti's own houses. The group includes a coffee table shaped like a doghouse and an elaborately carved lamppost. The newest addition: a birdhouse replica of an ancient Etruscan tombstone. From Kuma Enterprises, New York City.

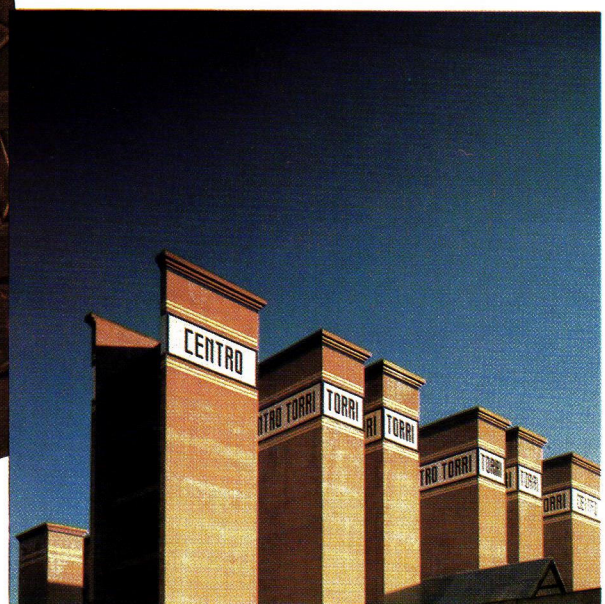
A Ship in the Night

French designer Sylvain Dubuisson wanted to make the "most simple thing," so he created a bed with a mast and a sail. Available, with mattress, through Fourniture, 43 rue de l'Evangile, 75886 Paris.



24-Karat Seating

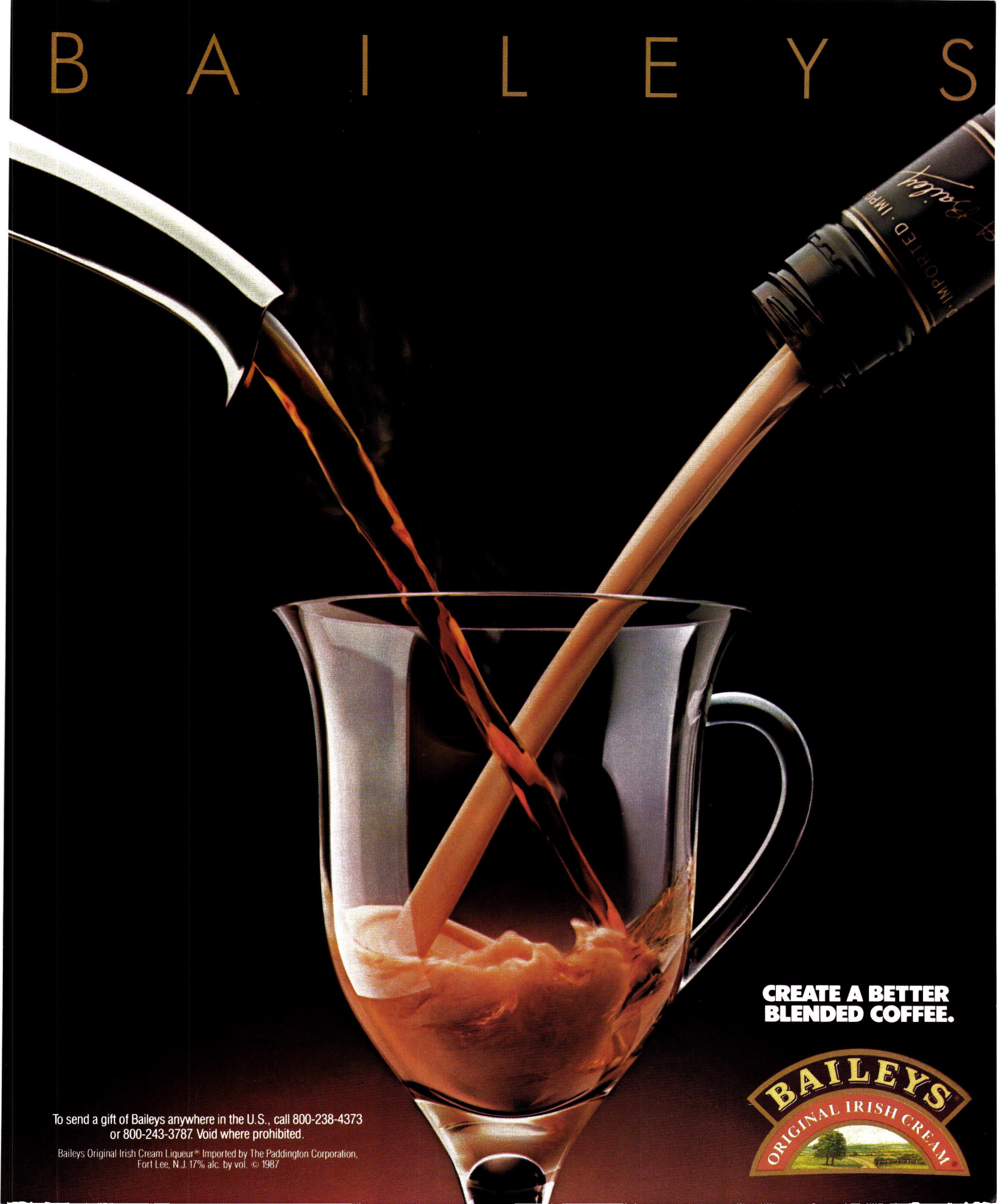
Literally worth its weight in gold, the cloth that has covered royal chairs for centuries and added gleam to the grandest houses is being reintroduced in the U.S. after four decades by Christopher Hyland, New York. Made of 24-kt hand-beaten gold strands woven with silk and fringe to match, this glittering textile is part of a collection (priced at $210–$900 per yard) which brings the Gilded Age to the present.



THE MALL, ITALIAN STYLE

It's surprising that such a well-known and respected architect as Aldo Rossi even agreed to design a large suburban shopping center in Parma, Italy. The results, however, are staggering—no banal sprawl in the not-so-grand American mall tradition. Ten 50-foot brick towers are banded near the top with bold ceramic tile signs that recall the typography used on early twentieth century industrial buildings. Derived from the early modern, rather than classical, past, the Centro Torri complex is bound to become a local monument, and perhaps even an international one as well.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: TOM McWILLIAM; ALEXANDRE BAILHACHE; PAUL WARCHOL; CARLOS NÚÑEZ (2)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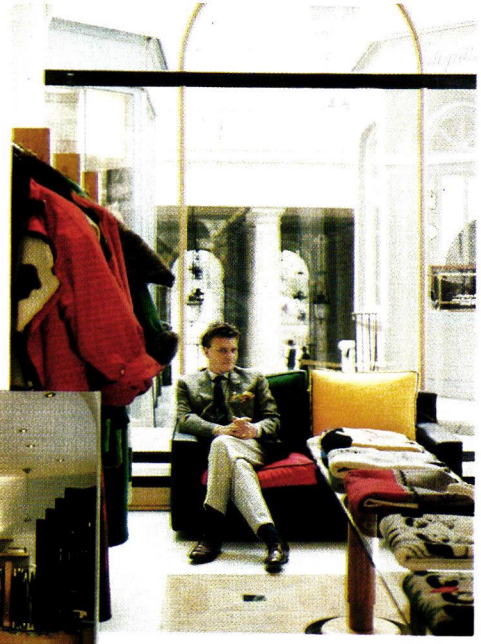
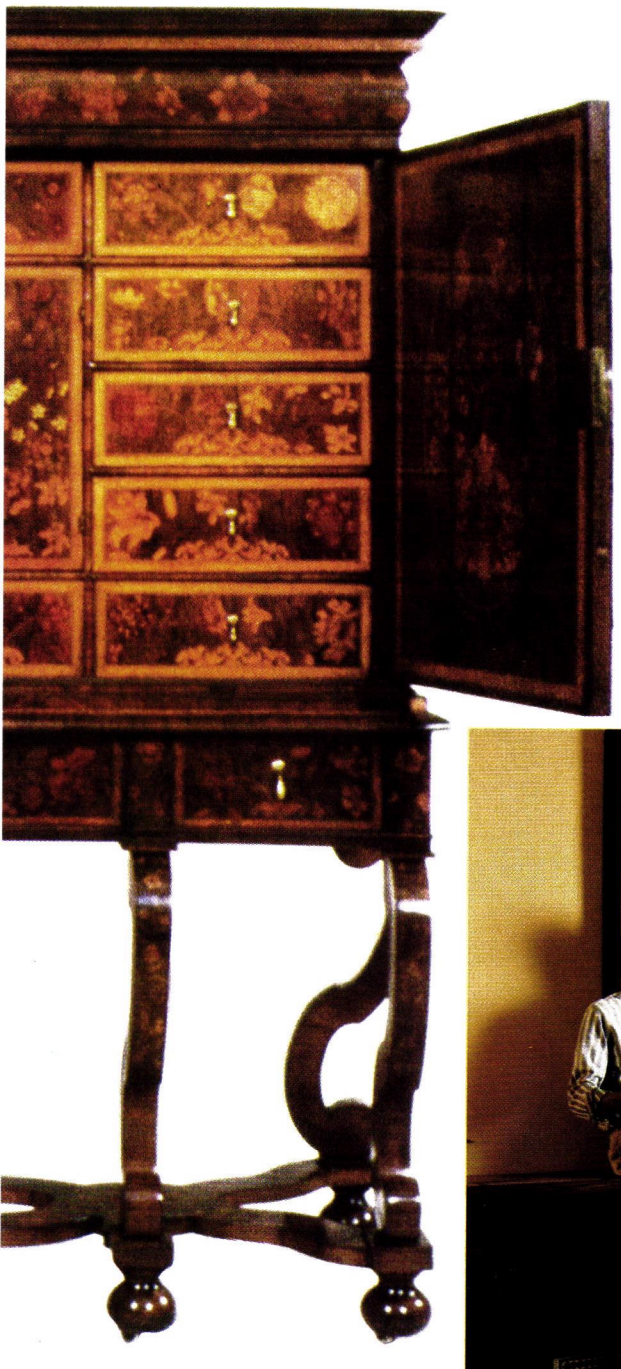
CASTELBAJAC GLACÉ

Jean-Charles de Castelbajac, whose signature hand-painted canvas coats are as much about art as fashion, breaks ground by breaking walls. In his upbeat Paris boutique off the place des Victoires, the back wall that blocked one of the most poignant perspectives in the capital has been replaced by a towering glass arch. "The last time you could see from here through to the passage Colbert and into the Jardin du Palais-Royal was just before the Revolution," says the designer. "I love having this strong contact with the past and at the same time a window on the future." The boutique is the result of his hand-in-glove collaboration with decorator Patrick Maupeou. What the two of them were after, Castelbajac says, is the atmosphere of the "cell of a warrior monk."

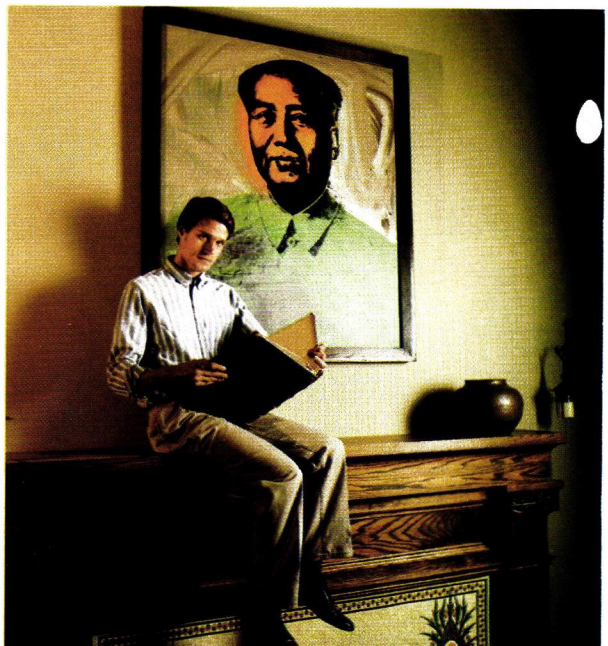




ROYAL REVUE

When William and Mary were crowned in England three hundred years ago, they became the dominant taste-setters of their adopted country. Now there is a fascinating view of how the decorative-arts style named for them influenced different levels of society: "Courts and Colonies: The William and Mary Style in Holland, England, and America," at New York's Cooper-Hewitt Museum, through February 12.

NOTES



INSPIRATIONS
Jed Johnson's Choice

"Each page of A. Racinet's *Polychromatic Ornament* (1873) is a work of art. It's a beautiful leather-bound book of historic patterns from the ancient Greeks going through the Turks, Moors, Celts, Chinese, Japanese. I often find myself turning to Racinet when I start on a project. Some of my hand-printed fabrics and stencils are interpretations of its designs. In Andy Warhol's house I used a Greek motif for one of the bedrooms. Sometimes I'll see an intriguing color ensemble I never would have thought of, such as beige combined with black and grass-green. Every time I go through Racinet, I see something new, something wonderful."

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: THIBAULT JEANSON (2); GEORGE LANGE; COURTESY COOPER-HEWITT MUSEUM

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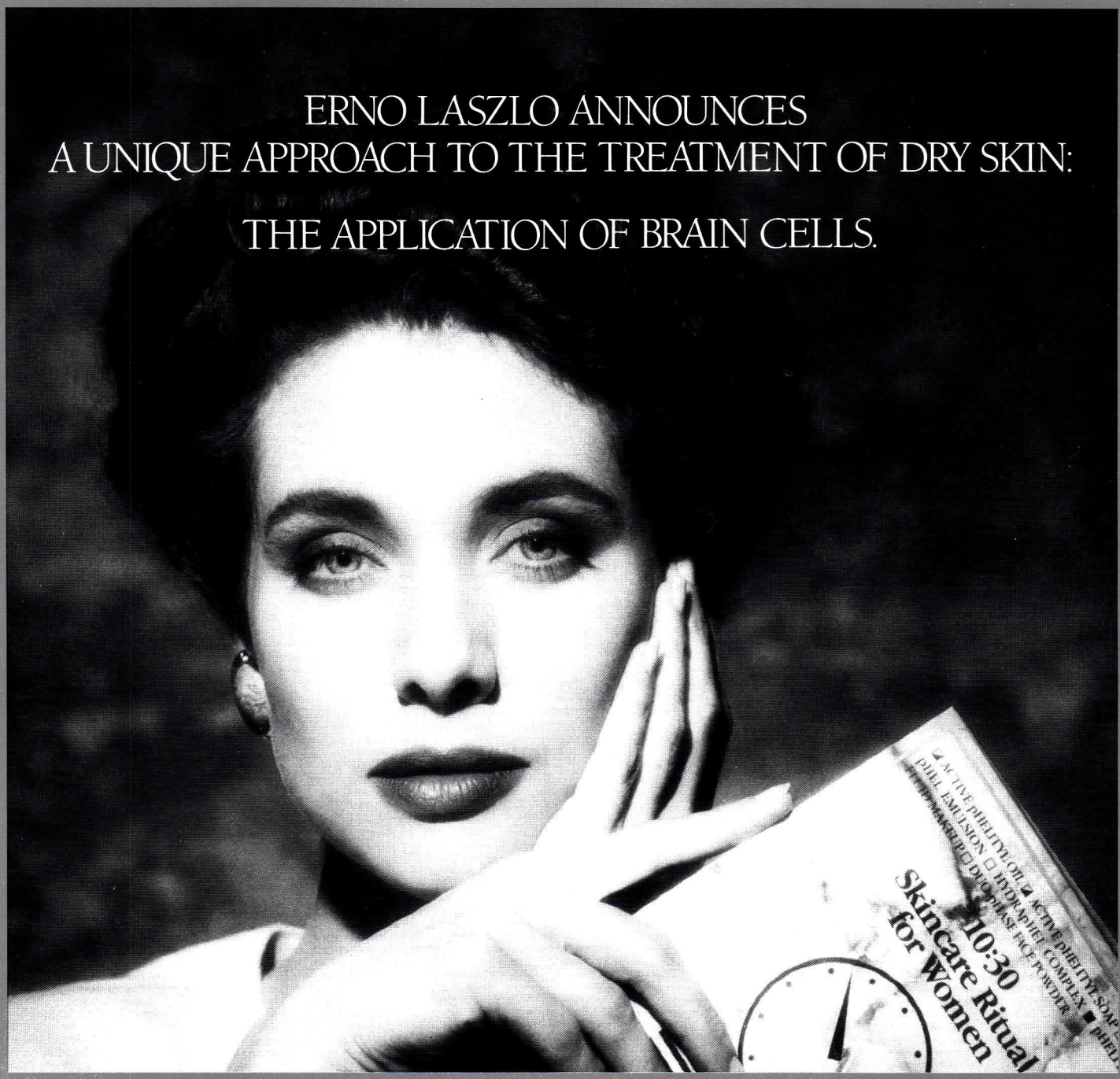

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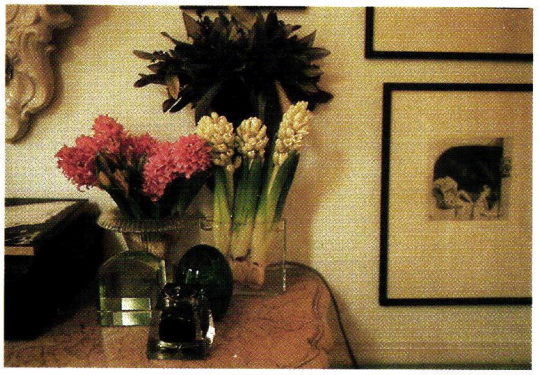
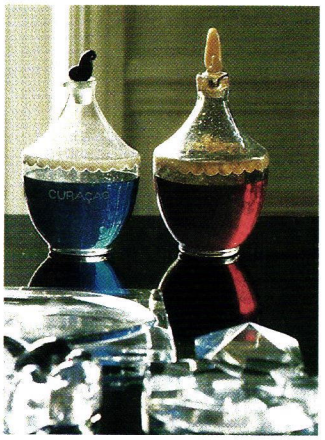
Undone in Paris

The editor in chief of French *Vogue* detests decorated apartments, writes Edmund White. Produced by Marie-Paule Pellé

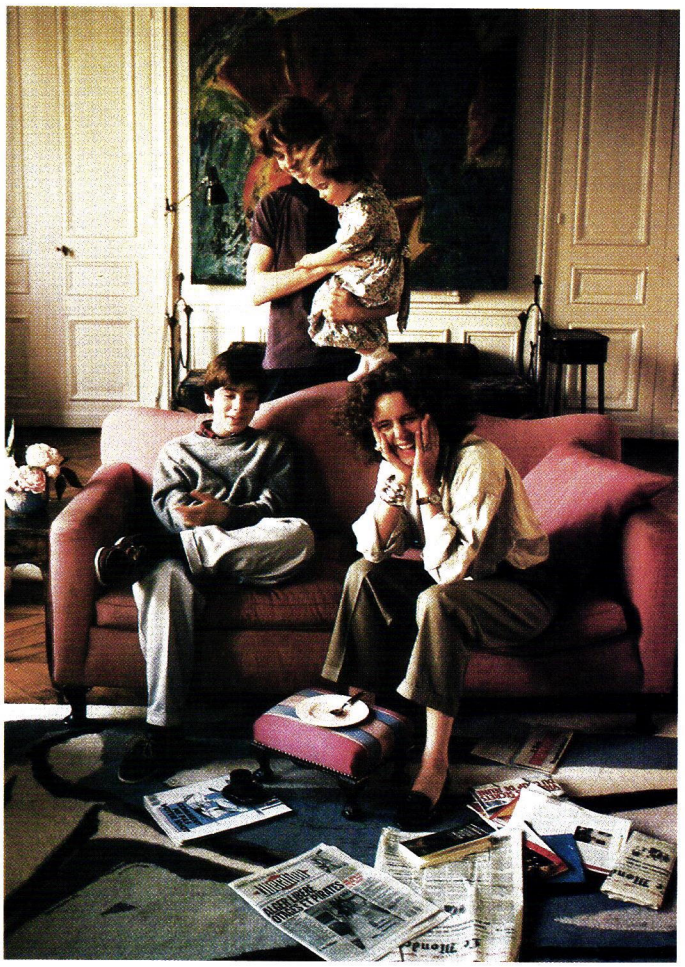
Colombe Pringle is a woman of ripe contradictions, as complex as her hybrid name—her mother is French and her father English and she can scarcely finish a sentence in just one language. She has a horror of decorated apartments, which for her are as appealing as overdressed women. She and her husband, the painter Philippe Royer, long ago resolved never to redo an apartment—never to install a new kitchen or bathroom, for instance. Within that set of limitations, however, they are determined to impose their taste.





A diverse array of objects, above, includes favorite drawing. Right: Paired glass bottles designed by Groult and Lalique and Daum ashtrays.

Philippe, like most painters, is more interested in details than in the overall composition of a place. Painters like corners, moments, objects, whereas someone like Colombe, who is used to assembling a whole magazine every month, looks out for themes and continuities. For Colombe, visual style is compounded of her two nationalities. For instance, her dining room is terribly British—Wedgwood plates, old English silver, Chippendale chairs. Even the curtains are soberly luxurious in the best English fashion: blue on the side visible to guests, but—if momentarily tossed back by a breeze—then silver, for Colombe has fully lined them in a contrasting fabric. In all the rooms the walls are white, but the ceilings are each a different color—green in the dining room, blue and pink and other "Marie Laurencin colors," as Colombe puts it, in the other rooms.



Saturday afternoon en famille. Pringle and her children consume the papers, left. The painting is by Pringle's husband, Philippe Royer. Below: In the drawing room, pink moiré sofas, a Bram van Velde carpet, and, by Groult, a leather armchair and black-lacquered desk.

But if the dining room is as English as her banker father, the two sitting rooms are as French as her mother, the writer Flora Groult, whose uncle was couturier Paul Poiret, who virtually invented modern fashion in the early decades of this century. And Colombe's grandfather was a celebrated decorator, André Groult. "So you see, our flat is a mixture of English formality and arty Parisian taste of the 1920s with lots of young abstract painters thrown in," Colombe explains.

A woman from such a family, as distinguished as it is bohemian, naturally comes equipped with fascinating possessions. Scattered about the seven-room apartment are

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The Chair by the Window

I don't know how many sweaters my mother's knitted while sitting in her high wingback chair, but surely enough to keep an army warm. They were all knitted for me or my father and, then, my two girls. Solitary as knitting is, Mother always prefers having someone around, which was usually me. We'd talk for hours, Mother knitting while I held the yarn, the two of us solving the world's problems and some of our own as the sun made its way across the window. Whenever I see that chair, I think of her and how lucky I am to be kept warm by her sweaters, and her love.

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works by William Blake and the set designer for the Ballets Russes, Léon Bakst, as well as by Marie Laurencin, Raymond Duchamp-Villon, and Bram van Velde.

The apartment is on the avenue Montaigne, not far from the president's palace and the Champs-Élysées—one of the aristocratic neighborhoods of nineteenth-century Paris. But in this imposing frame Colombe

In the dining room, British formality is enlivened with Parisian aplomb.

strives for casualness, simplicity, and high spirits. Her three children feel free to drag home friends for lunch. Guests are encouraged to sprawl, relax—even a movie star will show up at Colombe's without makeup and in jeans. "What I like," Colombe states, "is formal food for informal evenings. I like every detail to be perfect—the cooking, the visual presentation on the plate, the table setting—but I don't want anyone to notice. I try to make people feel at home."

Although Colombe's husband inherited a château, the family seldom goes there. They have a "country house" that's far more sympatique—ten minutes away in Montparnasse on the Left Bank. "It's Philippe's studio," Colombe says. "And we pack up every Friday and spend the weekend in the atelier. Or sometimes we'll have a big Saturday lunch at the avenue Montaigne, then go over to the studio for coffee while Philippe paints." Her luncheons and dinners seldom grow larger than groups of eight: "If you have twelve, no one talks."

Rich bohemianism is perhaps the dominant phrase to describe Colombe's world, though no single term can capture a woman who's capable of saying, "I hate curtains and have them only in the dining room. Everywhere else I have blinds I made from a richly decadent Venetian fabric, which I like because it's so sad and baroque." Complexity makes for a restless, resourceful editor—and for an unclassifiable way of living. ♠

NICOLAS BRUANT

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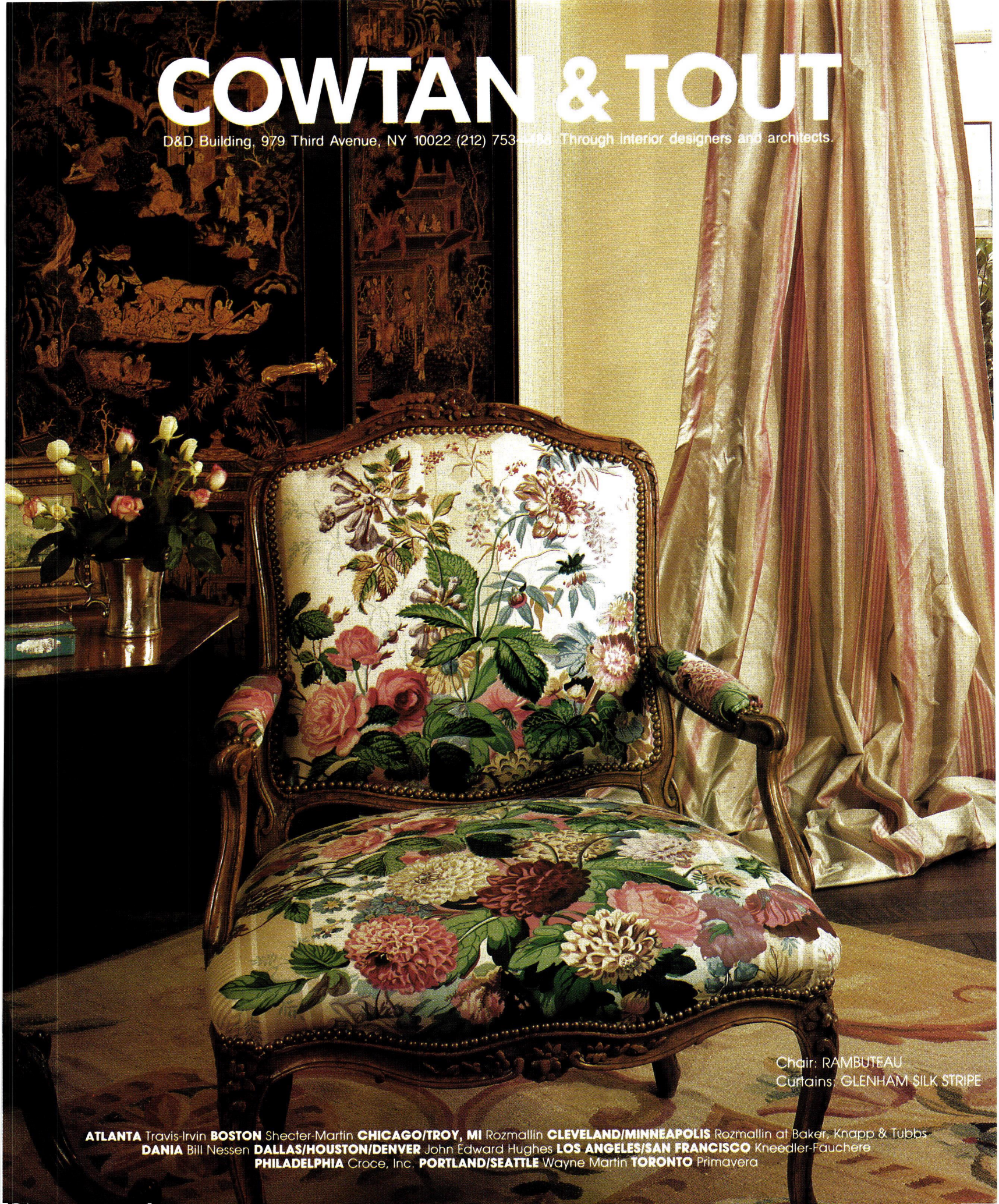

Chair: RAMBUTEAU
Curtains: GLENHAM SILK STRIPE

ATLANTA Travis-Irvin **BOSTON** Shecter-Martin **CHICAGO/TROY, MI** Rozmallin **CLEVELAND/MINNEAPOLIS** Rozmallin at Baker, Knapp & Tubbs
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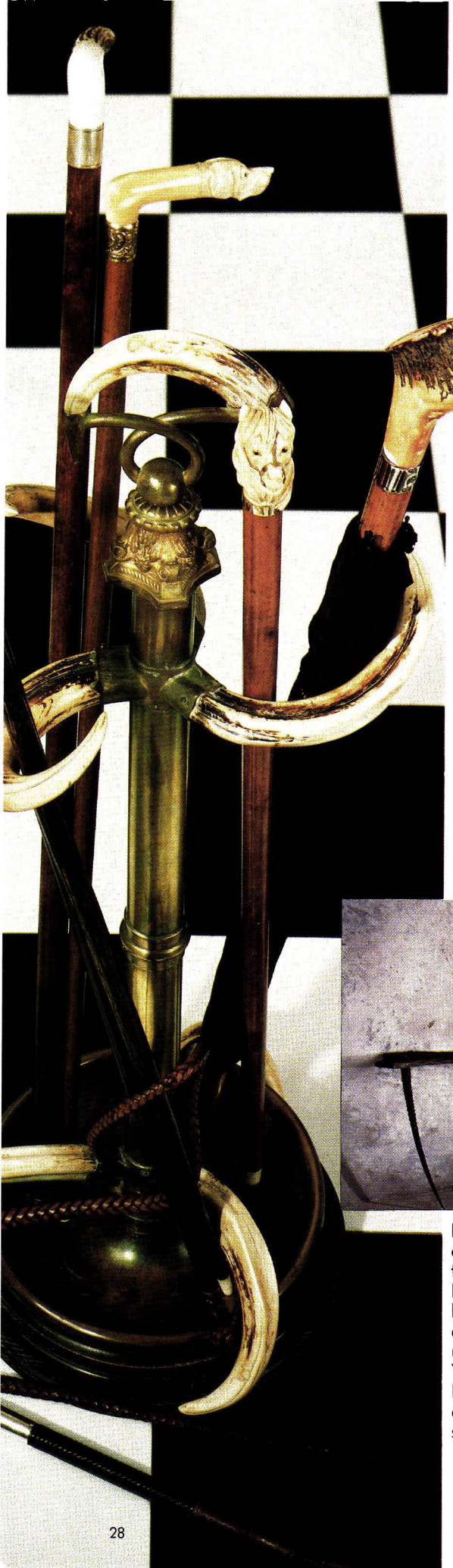
Wild Things

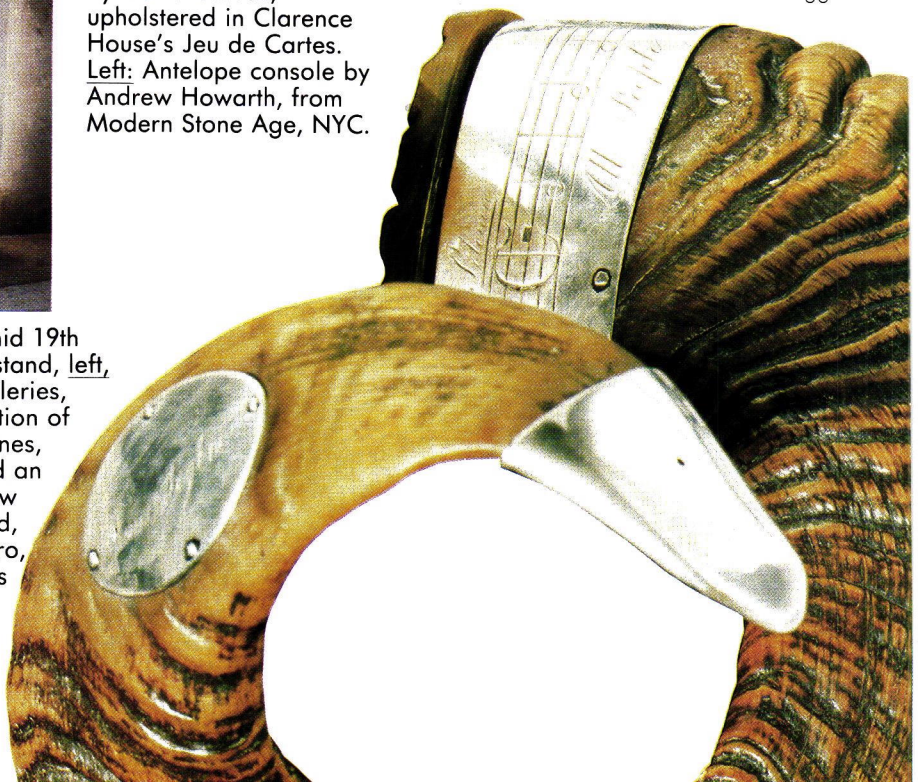
Antlers and horns stake out new territories



The natural defense of many noble beasts, horns have too long been associated with gloomy Bavarian hunting lodges and dusty men's clubs. Now, thanks to a few designers fearless enough to venture beyond the slick and the fussy, these prickly untamed appendages are making a comeback.

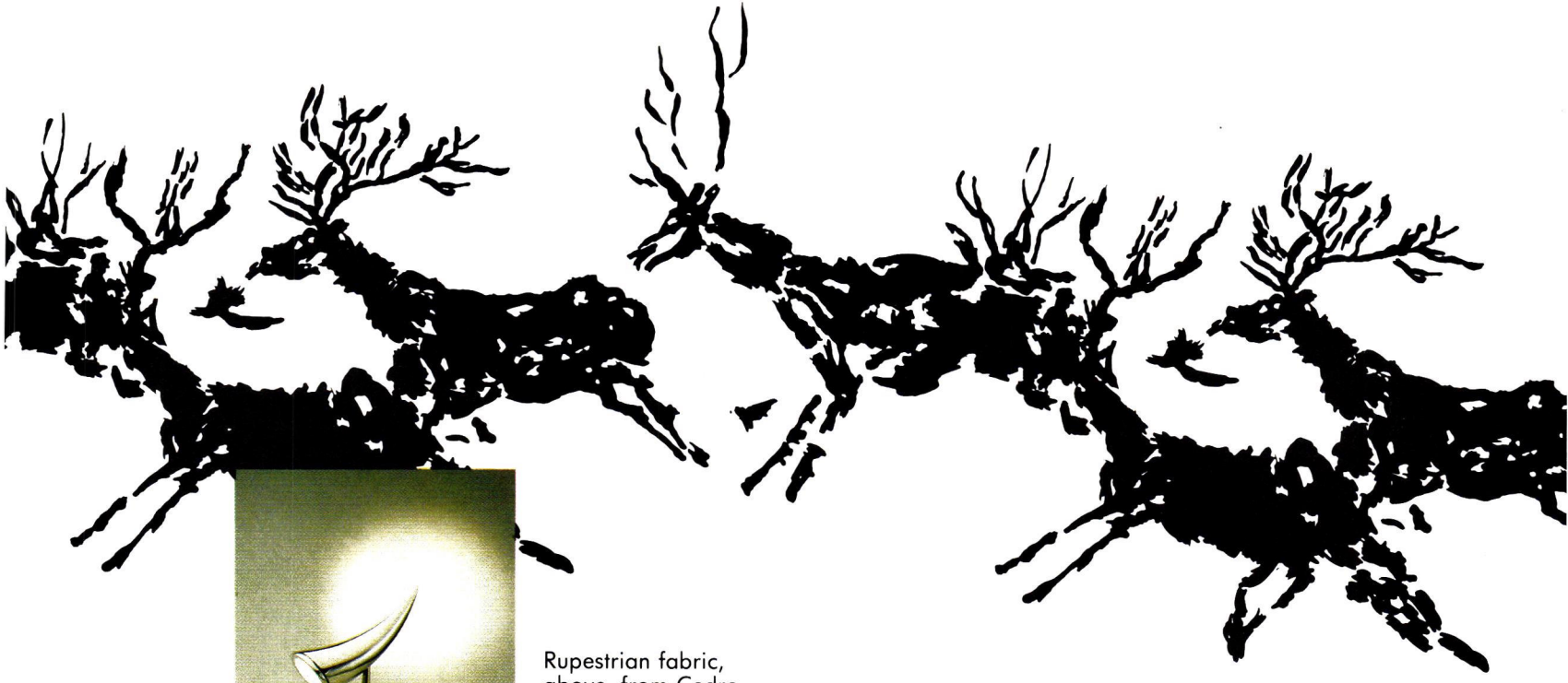
Horn shapes masquerading as table legs, chairs, and lights dominate the latest work of Paris's high-profile design teams Bonetti and Garouste

Horn chair, above, by David Barrett, upholstered in Clarence House's Jeu de Cartes. Left: Antelope console by Andrew Howarth, from Modern Stone Age, NYC.



Horn-and-brass mid 19th century umbrella stand, left, from James II Galleries, NYC, with a selection of horn and ivory canes, a riding whip, and an umbrella from New York's M. J. Knoud, Hoffman-Gampetro, and Prada. Details see Sources.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: CONSTANCE HANSEN; WILLIAM WALDRON; JOANNA RYSNIK; COURTESY FLOS; JOANNA RYSNIK (2); CONSTANCE HANSEN; DENNIS KRUKOWSKI



Rupestrian fabric, above, from Cedro, Madrid. Left: Ará reading lamp by Philippe Starck, from FLOS. Right: Timney-Fowler Raj fabric, at Christopher Hyland, NYC.

Masquerading as table legs, chairs, and lights, horns have untamed the design world

and Mathieu and Ray. And Philippe Starck honed in on horns for his renovation of the Royalton in New York (see page 70). The primitive instinct has also hit New York designer David Barrett, whose game room chairs, upholstered in a shocking-red playing-card print, stand on spiky deer antlers. At Ann-Morris Antiques in New York chandeliers are composed of tangles of antlers, which are naturally shed by elk and deer each year.

The passion for organic and unruly furniture is nothing new. In the Middle Ages lamps made of interlocked antlers illuminated baronial halls. And in the mid nineteenth century, when Victorian romantics fell for the grandeur of the Scottish highlands, horn settees, hat racks, and umbrella stands became the height of fashion. Closer to home, ranchers in Texas have been sitting on steer horns for generations. They could have predicted that the horn was destined for a new heyday. **Amicia de Moubray**

A selection of English horn buttons, right, from Tender Buttons, NYC. Left: Scottish snuff mull, c. 1770, with silver mounts, from Hoffman-Gampetro.

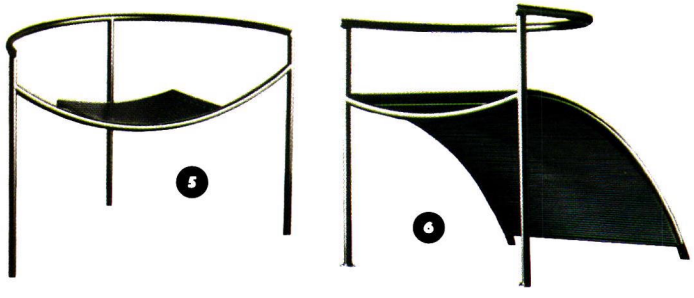
The 11 Most Uncomfortable Chairs

. . . and two that look uncomfortable but aren't. By Stuart Greenspan

"Oh, Botta! Botta! The Botta chair!" a friend of mine, an architecture and design critic, said when asked to name the most uncomfortable chair of the past decade. "It's mean how it lulls you into thinking you're going to sink into it, and then that rubber roller hits you in the small of the back like a brick!" Another friend, a magazine editor, once organized a chair competition and twelve years later still hasn't gotten over the experience. "I haven't sat in a new chair in ten years," she said. Lucky lady. If we could all carry our own old well-worn chairs with us wherever we go, as my editor friend apparently does, our lower backs and overall anatomies—not to mention our psyches—would be in much better shape.

And yet the energy expended by designers, architects, and artists on redesigning that most commonplace of human furnishings now seems boundless. A recently published book, *397 Chairs* (Abrams), records an exhibition sponsored by the Architectural League of New York last year which bears witness to the lengths to which many designers will go. And wherever we sitters venture, whether to a trendy new restaurant, a doctor's waiting room, a boardroom, an art gallery, or simply to friends, we are forced unwillingly and unwittingly into the role of guinea pig.

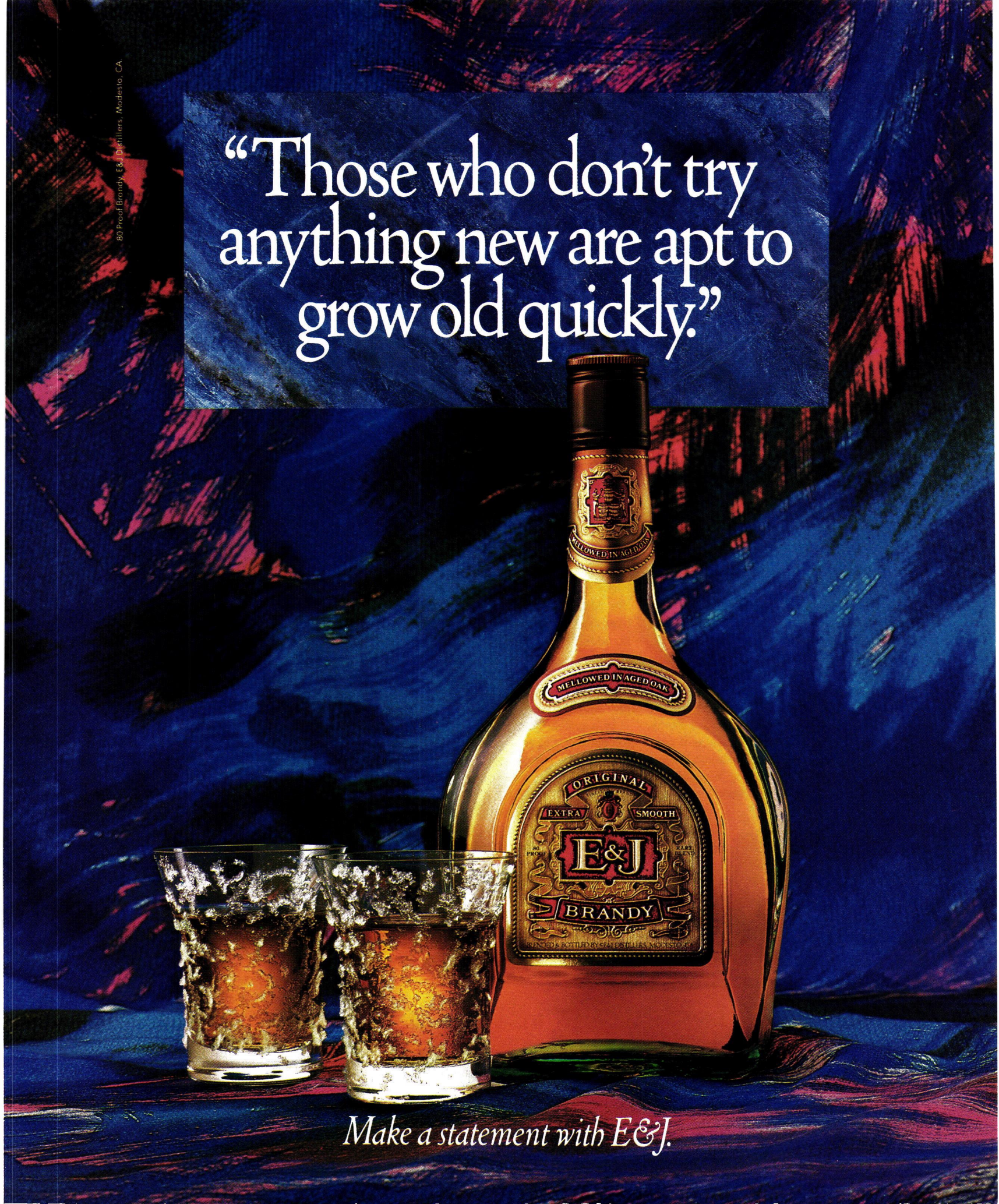
Not all new chairs are uncomfortable, of course. Some of the ones that look as if they might cause the greatest pain are among the most comfortable. The line designed for Knoll in 1984 by architects Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown is cartoonlike, bent-plywood rip-offs of historical furniture styles—Queen Anne, Chippendale, Sheraton, Art Deco—strikingly, some would say tastelessly, painted. Though they look as if they belong in a child's playroom, they are divinely comfortable. Each chair's seat and back, all of a piece, conform subtly but perfectly to the body. The legs are just the right height and heft for real people, and most important, the chair actually *gives*—just slightly, without sacrificing support, but enough to allow the flexibility required for comfort.



Divinely comfortable
Robert Venturi's bent-plywood version of a Queen Anne chair, left, for Knoll, conforms perfectly to the body. Details see Sources.

Looking even less arresting as places to perch are Scott Burton's Rock chair sculptures, which he has been making for some years. The rough bulk of the stone contrasting with the mirror-polished seats and backs makes these chairs look like resting places for gorillas. But through

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY KNOLL INTERNATIONAL; COURTESY ATELIER INTERNATIONAL; COURTESY ICF (4); COURTESY KNOLL INTERNATIONAL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some alchemy known only to the artist, one could happily sit in them forever. Similarly, a two-piece bench of boulders by sculptor Isamu Noguchi, installed in the lobby of the new Annenberg Building at New York's Mount Sinai Medical Center, is always occupied—although more conventional seating, not nearly such a hit with the public, rests unnoticed nearby. One can only assume that if such seating were harmful, it would not be part of a hospital's permanent furnishings.

What is shocking about many of the new chairs is that, in contrast to the accommodations of Burton and Noguchi, comfort is the promise, pain the experience. My personal choice for the most uncomfortable chair of the decade is the one designed by architect Richard Meier **1**. Meier, it seems, has a profound Frank Lloyd Wright complex—he finds it necessary to design not only the house but everything in it. And like Wright, he produces furniture to suit both his aesthetic and his ego, in the process showing almost total disregard for human comfort.

My first encounter was not with Meier's chair but with its complementary stool. There it gleamed in all its Wiener Werkstätte–derived glory: fine dark lacquer, elegant inviting lines. I approached, and as I sat, my rear end hit the razor-sharp edge of the seat; then I caught my lower back where it's most easily hurt and simultaneously lost my equilibrium as the badly balanced stool started to tip over. The Meier chair has only one advantage over the stool: its center of gravity is lower, so falling off is less likely. Falling off the stool, however, almost guarantees you'll never go back. Once you're in the chair, politeness demands that you stay put. At least for a while.

In a restaurant you're really trapped. Recently at a newly opened fancy Italian dining spot, I was given the choice of a plush banquette or Mario Bellini's Cab chair **2**, a glorious-looking armchair with a metal framework covered in leather. Expecting to be cushioned by the luxurious hide, I instead found my bottom lodged against something hard and ungiving and my arms pinned to my sides. Although the food was exquisite, as all the reviews later said, I can only remember how much I squirmed and how numb I felt at the end of the interminable meal.

There are plenty of other newly designed chairs that offer less than nothing in the way of comfort. Mario Botta is twice a winner in this category with his Latonda chair **3**—two flaring steel straps doing double damage to the sitter's back while wobbly legs and seat keep the rest of the body in a state of anxiety that only reaffirms the sadistic nature of the Prima design **4**. The true wizard of torture, however, is the celebrated young French designer Philippe Starck, whose inability to seat people—the Dr. Sonderbar **5** and Pat Conley **6** chairs are two examples—has not interfered at all with his success, either among critics or the merely fashionable who follow their leads. Starck's Richard III lounge chair **7**, designed for President Mitterand's apartments in the Élysée Palace must be singled out even among his own dubious achievements. How, we ask, can a lounge chair not be comfortable? Sit in this one.

How would you like to sit for an hour with a hammer pressing into your shoulder blade?

But Starck tries too hard to be hard; if he'd tried a little less, he might be at the top of this list of insupportables. Olivier Gagnere's stackable chair **8** and René-Jean Caillette's RJC chair **9**, meanwhile, seem in a dead heat for total discomfort. Mark Zeff's Victoria chair **10**, designed to be slipcovered, is so insubstantial that you never know what you're getting into and should be avoided at all costs as hazardous to your health. And then, if only to add the ideological to the physiological, one must mention Linus Corraggio's artful Hammer and Sickle design **11**. How would you like to sit for an hour or two with a hammer pressing into your shoulder blade, glasnost or not? ▲

If looks could kill Scott Burton's Rock chair sculpture, left, appears to be a "resting place for gorillas"—but people love to sit on it.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY ICF; DEIDI VON SCHAEWEN; COURTESY FURNITURE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY; LIZZIE HIMMEL; CARLOS NÚÑEZ; COURTESY MAX PROTETCH GALLERY

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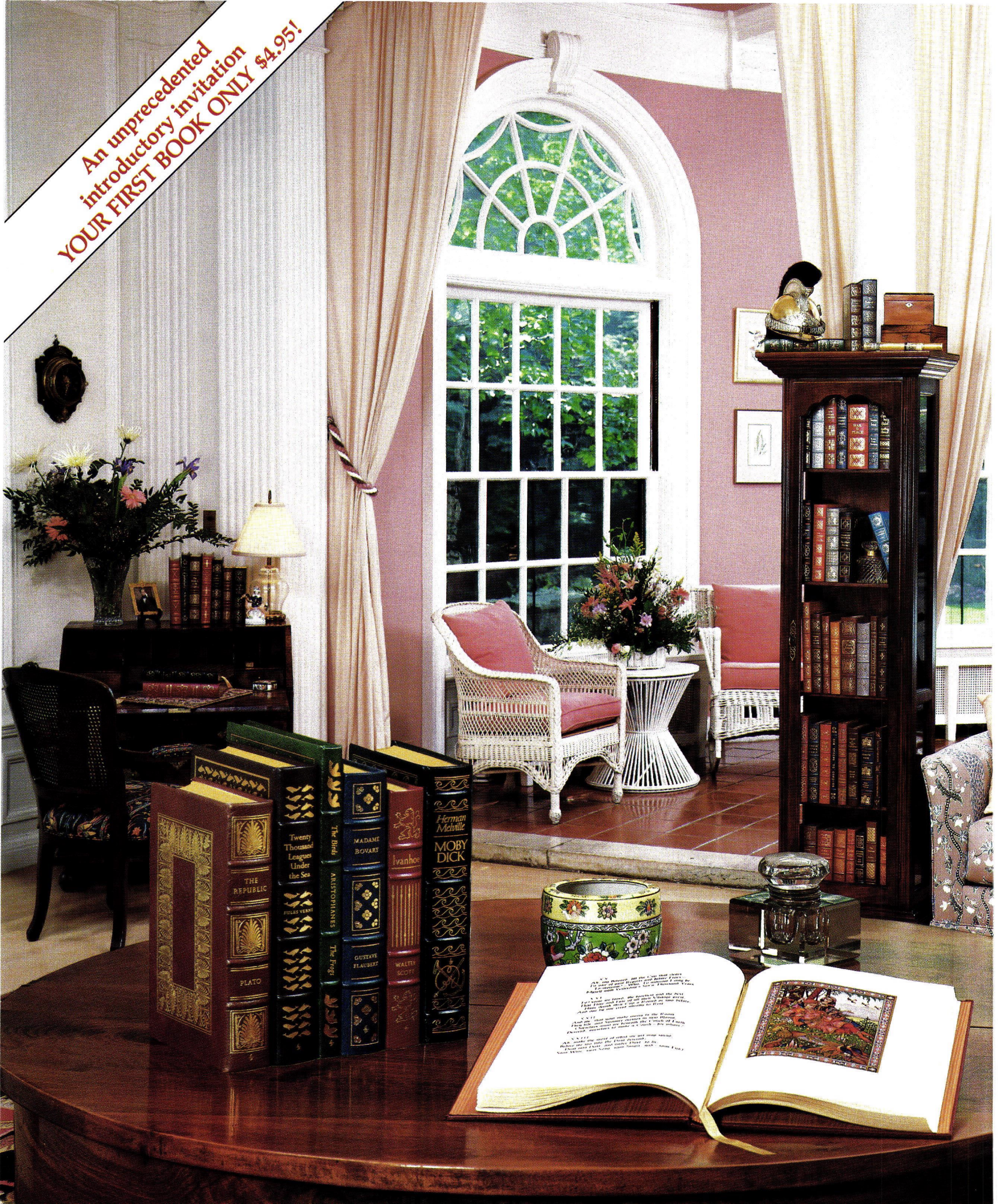
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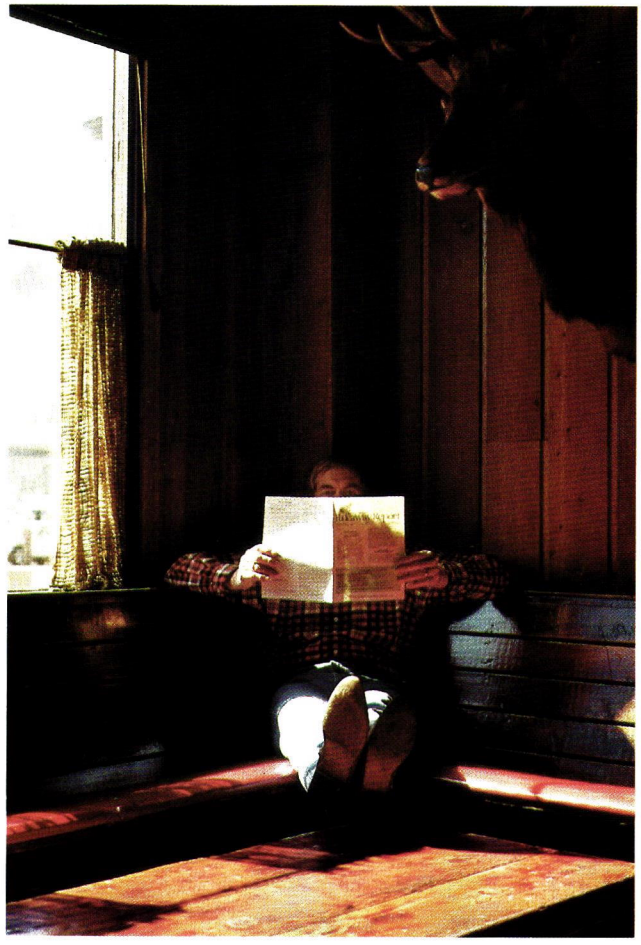
Escape Routes

Who is Andrew Harper? And why does he get to "research" the world's most peaceful and unspoiled places? By Cynthia Gorney

Ten years ago this February, in the middle of a week when he was supposed to be at work, a man with a midlife crisis was sitting in his house outside Washington, D.C., and contemplating, as he describes it now, "my 870th idea." There was an amazing amount of snow on the ground, which was our man's excuse for not reporting to his office: he worked as an administrative assistant to a member of Congress, a job he liked but had spent the last 869 ideas trying to figure out how to escape.

He wanted out. He was tired of working for companies and offices. He wanted to run things himself. He had thought about the things he liked and the things he was good at, and it occurred to him that he had developed a certain following as both writer and traveler. He had worked in advertising for many years, which was where he wrote, and on his vacations he and his wife generally managed to end up in places nobody had ever heard of—wonderful elegant places that were brilliantly staffed and made for terrific stories as soon as the family came home.



The *Hideaway* reporter hides away in Sun Valley, Idaho.

The blizzard of February 1979 took three days to subside, and by the time it did, a typewritten newsletter called the *Hideaway Report* had issued forth from the kitchen table. "A Bahamian Island for Robinson Crusoe," read the opening headline, and the newsletter went on to exclaim about a tiny Caribbean retreat where there was no electricity and the only access was by boat from Nassau. It also described the splendid and oddly temperate island of Tresco, in the Isles of Scilly, off the southwest coast of England, and a place in Virginia where paying guests could lodge in a log house in the middle of a tree farm. "I remember that place," says Harper, now 48, gazing ruefully at the first issue of *Hideaway Report*. "Couldn't feature it today. It was too rustic."

Harper took out advertisements in *The New Yorker* and *The Wall Street Journal*—"wrapping myself in a mantle of respectability," he says—and within a year his monthly newsletter had 350 subscribers, a thousand after two years, and after three, enough to convince him that it was worth the gamble to quit his job and turn the *Hideaway Report* into something more ambitious than his own brightly written accounts of places he had once visited. Ten years after the great Washington snows of 1979, Harper sends the monthly *Hideaway Report* to 15,000 subscribers—he has about 200 openings now, but will accept no more than that. Those fortunate globetrotters pay $85 a year to read the accounts of his carefully annotated travels among what his newsletter calls "peaceful vacation and executive retreats for the sophisticated traveler."

They are rustic no longer. A glance through the September 1988 *Hideaway Report* finds Harper exulting in a Fijian resort called Turtle Island, observing that complacency appears to have beset the staff at the New Mexico resort called Rancho Encantado, and answering a reader's query about the best cruises along the Nile. July finds him in Bali, Bangkok, and a richly appointed mountain cabin in Montana; June sends him floating down the Dutch canals on a barge stocked with down comforters and nightly chocolates. February has him snorkeling outside his bougainvillea-draped lanai in Belize. You can see that what we have here is a midlife crisis resolved with some flair.

"I love it," Harper says. He is slouching contentedly at the desk in the great light-filled house he and his wife built two years ago in the Idaho ski town of Sun Valley, where they moved when the *Report* had established itself firmly enough to liberate them from Washington, D.C. When Harper is asked about his favorite hideaway now, he usually ends up telling people it is Sun Valley, since his sorties in search of hideaways—this may be difficult to swallow, but Harper says it with great sincerity—are undertaken, after all, in the line of duty.

"For me no trip is a vacation," he claims. "I always think of it as business." Harper

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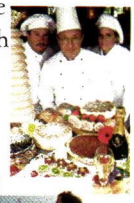

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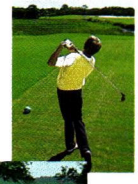

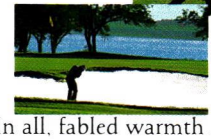

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says he travels with none of the conventional travel writer's amenities: he never uses the Andrew Harper pseudonym when he checks into a hotel, never identifies himself as a travel writer, and never accepts complimentary airline tickets or hotel lodgings. "I never introduce myself to the general manager," he says. "Housekeepers are great; they'll show you any room you want to see. Anyway, if a hotel doesn't show you a room, then it's not much of a hotel. Most Europeans, before they even check in, ask to see their room. I think Americans aren't harsh enough in that respect."

One place was so dismal that his chief memory is of waiting for the plane to take him away

Since he saves most of the *Report* for hotels and resorts he particularly likes, Harper leaves out more than half the places he visits. Some of those, he says, are real bombs. He remembers one French Polynesian place so dismal that his chief memory is of waiting for the airplane to take him away. "And your most welcome amenity is a flyswatter. And you and who knows how many other people have been deceived by the guidebook."

Harper is unenthusiastic about guidebooks, mostly because the material seems so dated. He says his readers send him no fewer than 250 letters a month suggesting places he should visit. He also finds his hideaways by sitting around asking himself odd questions he doesn't know the answers to. What's the highest resort in the United States? (Irwin Lodge, above Crested Butte, Colorado, altitude 10,700 feet, accessible only by lodge-run Sno-Cats or snowmobiles.) Where did John F. Kennedy honeymoon? (San Ysidro Ranch, part of the time, near Santa Barbara, charming cottages and horseback riding.)

Harper followed the reports of fugitive financier Robert Vesco for a while; the story had a certain intrinsic interest, of course, since Vesco was being rather famously pursued around the western hemisphere by an assortment of flatfoots who wanted him to own up to his shady dealings back home. But what Harper really wanted to know, as Vesco rumors surfaced on one Caribbean island after another, was whether he was finding terrific hotels as he fled. "I'd heard he was in Barbuda, north of Antigua, and that there was a delightful hotel there and that *60 Minutes* was going to do a piece on Barbuda and Vesco and was trying to get the crew into the hotel. The hotel turned down the crew. I said, 'Somebody who turned down *60 Minutes*—this is going to be great.' " He checked in incognito, Harper says, and it was.

Culled from conversation and bits of his newsletters over the past year is the following sampler of Harperisms.

Three places you think you want to visit but don't really:

TAHITI "Polluted, crowded, noisy, obnoxious. The prices are generally outrageous for value received, and for whatever reason, the Tahitian people do not come across as warm and hospitable. They come across as indifferent and aloof."

BERMUDA "It had a certain charm years ago, and I think the problem is they're overdeveloping as far as the number of hotels and the number of cruise ships coming in. In fairness, I think they're beginning to cut back on the number of cruise ships."

SAINT THOMAS "Overdeveloped. There are so many other more beautiful places in the Caribbean where the people are friendlier, where there is less congestion."

Three places you do want to visit before everybody else catches on:

ANGUILLA "It's starting to take off; two of the ten top hotels in the Caribbean are right on that island, and the people there are so kind and sincere."

NEW ZEALAND "Delightful country. New Zealand is the United States of 1950. People buy a car there, and everybody in the community wants to come over and look at it."

BALI "One of those mystical places that travelers visit once and remember for the rest of their lives."

Three places to go immediately after winning the lottery:

VILLA SAN MICHELE, ITALY "Elegant and atmospheric, 28-room hotel hewn from fifteenth-century Franciscan monastery commanding glorious hilltop views over Florence and the Arno Valley." Double $600 and up, including American buffet breakfast and choice of à la carte lunch or dinner for two. Via di Doccia 4, 50014 Fiesole, Italy; 59451. U.S. contact (800) 223-6800.

THE POINT, NEW YORK Former Rockefeller mansion, now a hotel. "Upstairs in the boathouse is the most wonderful room—you can hear the slapping of the water, and there's a wraparound porch on three sides." Boathouse room, $650, including all meals and drinks. Saranac Lake, NY 12983; (518) 891-5678.

TIGER TOPS JUNGLE LODGE, NEPAL "Unique and very special. Fabled outpost perched on stilts among trees. Typical day includes a morning safari on elephant back to photograph the big game. Bengal tigers and leopards glimpsed only at night from specially designed blinds constructed near the lodge." Double $400, with meals and elephant safaris. Box 242, Katmandu, Nepal. U.S. contact (415) 346-3402.

Three excellent dollar values:

HOTEL LA MARIPOSA, COSTA RICA "Crowns a secluded bluff offering spectacular vistas of the Pacific, embracing jungle terrain tumbling down mountainsides to deserted crescent beaches that rank among the most beautiful in the world." Double $135, including breakfast and dinner. Manuel Antonio Beach, Box 4, Quepos, Costa Rica; 77-03-55.

HOTEL PALACIO DE SETEAIS, PORTUGAL "Stunning mansion hotel near Lisbon, lovely grounds and staff." Double $150, including breakfast. Avenue Barbosa du Docage 6, 2710 Sintra, Portugal; 9233200.

KUPU-KUPU BARONG, BALI "Spectacular views of terraced rice paddies plunging downward to the waters of the Ayung River valley." Double $115, including breakfast. Kedewatan-Ubud, Bali, Indonesia; 23172.

Three places to go for unfettered romance:

MERIDIAN CLUB, TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS "You can walk along the beach for two and a half miles—you don't have to wear a stitch if you don't want to." Deluxe double $500, including all meals. Pine Cay, Turks and Caicos Islands, British West Indies. U.S. contact (800) 225-4255, in NY State (212) 696-4566.

TURTLE ISLAND "Guests are granted the ultimate fantasy of reserving their own private beach or uninhabited island for the day—complete with a sumptuous champagne picnic lunch." Twelve luxury cottages on the beach: six-night package, all inclusive, $3,629 per couple. A fifty-minute seaplane ride from Fiji, in the Lau island group. U.S. contact (800) 826-3083.

HOTEL SAN PIETRO, ITALY "Enchanting seaside resort hotel clinging to a cliff along breathtaking Amalfi coastline, an hour south of Naples." Via Laurito 2, 84017 Positano, Salerno, Italy. U.S. contact (800) 223-9832, in NY State (212) 599-8280. ▲

At first she thought it was the Golden Alaska Caviar, or the chilled vodka. But when his face took on that ear to ear grin, the one she hadn't seen for a while, she knew it was more.

"Let's get married," he said.

"We're already married," she said.

"Again," he said.

And over Pink Lobster Bisque and Peppered Canneloni they laughed and planned a shipboard wedding.

And when the last morsel of Royal Pheasant was gone, when the Gateau Napoleon had been reduced to crumbs, it was written in stone.

Wednesday morning, on the ssCostaRiviera, somewhere between Grand Cayman and Cozumel, Lido Deck aft, David and Jennie Curland got married again. A waiter, Giovanni D'Angelo, stood up for David. The Chief Purser, Lorenzo Dasso, gave the bride away. And Captain Elio Mandrilli pronounced them man and wife.

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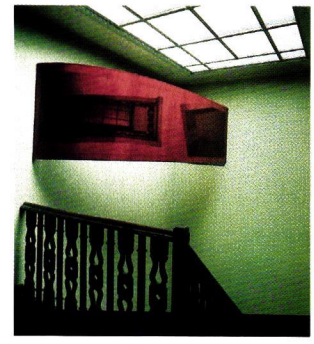
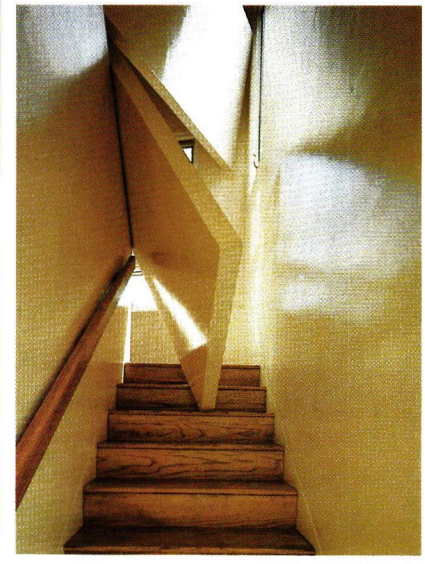
Clockwise from far left: A bookrack in Paolini's "guest room" in Ghent; Kosuth's censored Freud, *Zero & Not*, Ghent; in a Seattle backyard, *GEO-TV* by Galligan and Loseno; Ireland's aggressive Santa Barbara installation; one of Kemps's series *5 maxime's*, Ghent.

Artists in Residences

The newest art events are taking place in the privacy of other people's houses. By Kenneth Baker





Art today looms larger in public awareness than ever before, yet, strangely, the more art surrounds us, the harder it is to connect intimately with any work in particular. When a blockbuster museum show attracts great numbers, people find themselves forced to trudge en masse past the art like window-shoppers. Recently, though, art events that address these dilemmas have begun to take place in Europe and America. Neither exhibitions nor performances in the conventional sense, the new format is a delicate collaboration between citizens and artists—a dovetailing of art and private lives. The prototype was the "Chambres d'Amis" show that took place in Ghent, Belgium, over a three-month period in 1986. In 58 private houses artists installed works done in response to the settings made available for them by their hosts.

"Chambres d'Amis" inspired the recent "Home Show" organized by the Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum (CAF). (The two-year-old Seattle program "Homes for Art," sponsored by Nine One One Contemporary Arts Center, has so far only presented works outside people's houses rather than inside them.) The "Home Show" crossed the threshold, bringing artists and visitors into the living spaces—into the psychological and domestic spheres—of some very game Santa Barbarans.

None of the ten "Home Show" hosts put themselves on the line more openly than David and Pat Farmer, who allowed collaborators Kate Ericson and Mel Ziegler to remove the cabinet, closet, and passageway doors from all the rooms in their ranch house. The artists piled the doors upright in the living room, roughly according to height, where they stood bunched up like nervous Boy Scouts at attention. The open cabinets seemed to inhale light and air as if they had been awaiting a chance to show their stuff. Ericson and Ziegler laid bare a landscape of consumer still lifes embodying the most unconscious choices Americans make about the way they live. Trying to see just where these instinctive decisions might lie was very much like trying to read a more conventional work of art. Yet no judgment on the visitor's part was called for. In fact, the piece gave a new edge to the old adage about people who live in glass houses.

More physically imposing was David Ireland's installation for CAF director Betty Klausner and her husband, Bob. Ireland rendered a stairway nearly im-

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY MUSEUM VAN HEDENDAAGSE KUNST, GHENT, NC; SUSAN GALLIGAN AND DAVID LOSENO; WAYNE McCALL; ATTILIO MARANZANO

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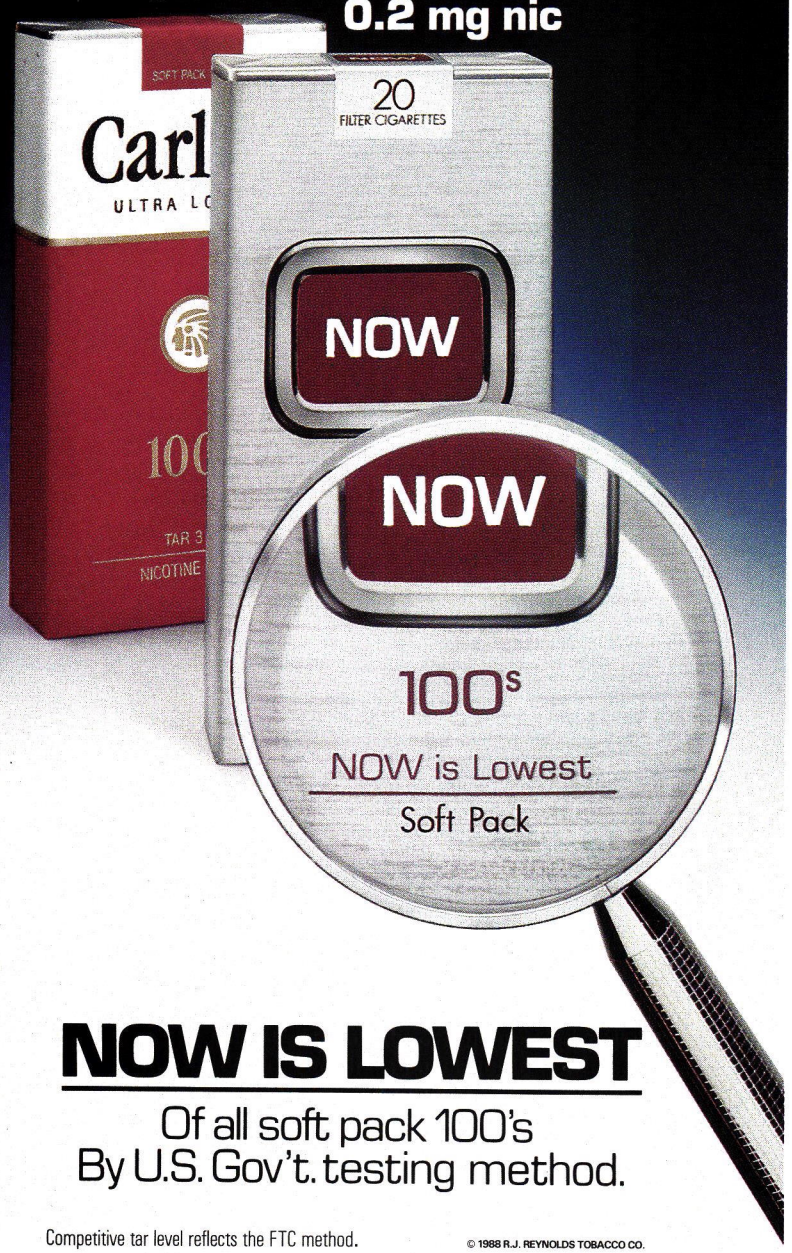

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passable by lodging within it two huge varnished white slabs that looked like renegade walls making a break for the downstairs doorway. People who slipped around these barriers and up the stairs got a picture-window view of the Pacific for their trouble.

Ann Hamilton's piece was the most enigmatic and lyrical of the bunch. She took over an airy high-ceilinged room at the center of a modern house, a room that divides kitchen and laundry from bedrooms and den. She covered the walls with eucalyptus leaves embedded in sheets of wax. She piled a snowdriftlike mound of singed gilt-edged white shirts on a table and stationed a performer in a chair to stare silently at the results for the duration of the work. Two vaporizers filled the room with the scent of eucalyptus. Were all these shirts meant to bring to mind the laundresses that reappear in French painting from Fragonard to Daumier to Degas? Or were they a kind of symbolic calendar related more to the life of the house than to memories of art? Filled with references to labor, as Hamilton's installations typically are, the piece seemed to emanate both resignation and the physical release that follows a job well done. I could imagine the work slowly instilling in the house's owner, Jill Barnitz, the need to maintain it permanently, mute performer and all.

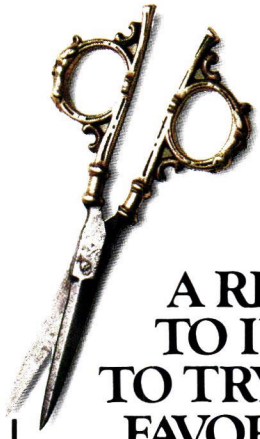
Can art really license nosing around a stranger's bedroom?

How many times have you passed a work of art in the street without recognizing it on sight as art? The "Home Show" often offered such instructive confusions, seamlessly integrating into its homely settings the art that made this a challenging event.

Joseph Kosuth, who has been making use of texts and the ideas of Sigmund Freud in recent years, chose the house of psychiatrist Jon Tatomer. (Kosuth also took part in "Chambres d'Amis," where he likewise worked in the house of a psychiatrist.) Visitors were directed to an upstairs bedroom in Tatomer's brown-shingled cottage. Entering a little uneasily—can art really license nosing around a stranger's bedroom?—one discovered that the walls and ceiling were painted black with MODUS OPERANDI stenciled in white on the wall above a chest. Two nearly identical color photographs of the room—one omitting and one containing the phrase on the wall—flanked the fireplace.

The black paint job obviously was Kosuth's own modus operandi in this situation. But what about the perfect rows of vintage Penguin paperbacks between two glass decanters on top of the chest and packed into the niche above the fireplace? Did Kosuth move these volumes from elsewhere in the house or leave them where he found them? Were they forms in Kosuth's art or contents of the psychiatrist's life? Could they be both?

Such quandaries—however refreshing to the eye and mind—are experiences that most public art and conventional exhibitions are designed to obviate. Yet, since Marcel Duchamp declared a few items of common manufacture to be his "work" over seventy years ago, twentieth-century artists have periodically made art "disappear" as a means of directing our attention to what is, or can be, considered an aesthetic experience. The "Home Show" proved that the rift between art and life may be usefully narrowed without artistic compromise, just by loosening a little the customary bounds of privacy and exclusion. The process strikes a soft convivial note too seldom heard in our culture, one that we may hear more often in the future. ♠ *Editor: Ingrid Sischy*



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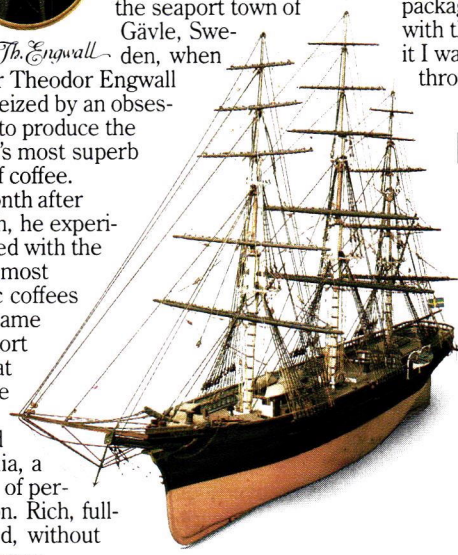

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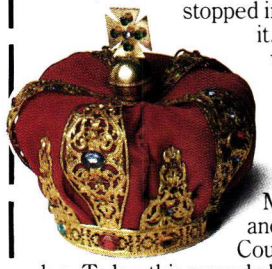

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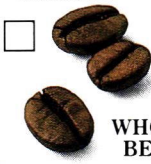
☐  **WHOLE BEAN**

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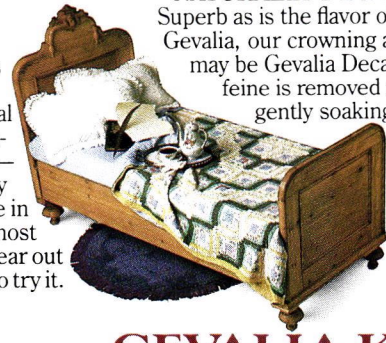

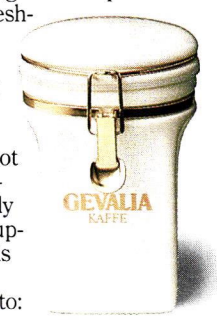

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pes. (Joël Robuchon's potato is the BF 15; translated from the French this means a small yellow-skinned potato with dark yellow waxy flesh.) The adjectives mealy and waxy refer to the texture of the potato after you cook it. Mealy potatoes become fluffy and almost grainy when you mash them; waxy potatoes become creamy and smooth.

Once you have decided which type of potato to cook, just try and ask your greengrocer or the guy stamping prices on laundry soap at your supermarket to point out the waxy potatoes and the mealy ones. Your reward will be an uncomprehending stare. But you can test the potatoes yourself. Buy one of each and, when you get home, mix a bowl of brine with nine and a half cups of water and one cup of salt. If a potato sinks into the brine, it is high in starch and will cook up mealy. If it floats, it belongs in the waxy category—unless it suffers from a potato ailment called hollow heart, in which case it will probably float in anything. All the potatoes from my grocer sank.

Mashed potatoes let us feel chic and trendy without having to eat tuna carpaccio

I used only large mealy Idaho russets in my mashed potato experiments. Avoid recipes that fail to specify which type of potato to use. Also avoid recipes that call for something like "six medium potatoes" without giving their total weight. Potatoes vary in size even more than human beings. If the cookbook specifies neither potato type nor total weight, discard immediately.

Peeling and Cutting Your Potato. The potato peel lobby would have you believe that all the nutrients are in the skin. Nothing could be further from the truth. If you peel your potatoes and cut them into pieces of the same size, they will cook evenly and quickly. Tiny pieces cook fastest but lose more nutrients and flavor because their total exposed surface area is larger. The best compromise is to cut peeled potatoes into slices between five eighths and three quarters of an inch thick. Wash them under cold water to rinse off any free starch released when you cut open the cells in peeling and slicing.

Cooking Your Potato. This is where we part company from all domestic mashed potatoes that have gone before us.

Years ago the instant mashed potato industry found that if you precook potatoes in 160-degree water for twenty minutes (twice as long for waxy varieties) and cool them, the amount of free starch in the final mash will be reduced by half. Without this discovery the instant mashed potato industry would today be manufacturing laundry starch.

I have experimented with both techniques and am guardedly optimistic that precooking may be the answer to our prayers. It appears to work like this. Cooking a potato is a two-stage process. The starch swells and gelatinizes within the cells when the potato reaches 160 degrees; then, nearer to the boiling point, the pectic cement between the cells degrades and the potato can be safely mashed. Precooking separates these steps. By cooling the potato slices after the starch has gelled, a process called retrogradation takes place in which the starch molecules bond to one another and lose much of their ability to dissolve again in water or milk, even if you later rupture the cells through ricing or mashing and even if you overdo the final cooling a bit. Retrogradation retards gumminess.

For the first time anywhere industrial precooking and retrogradation can now be brought into the home kitchen. The use of a thermometer is vital. Put the peeled and washed slices into a pan of 175-degree water. Keeping the pan on a low flame and adding a little cold water now and then, you will find it easy to maintain the water within a few degrees of 160 for the next twenty or thirty minutes as you go about your other tasks. The slices will become tough and resilient and lose their translucent appearance. Drain the potatoes and transfer them to a bowl into which you run cold tap water, until the slices feel cool to the touch, and leave them there for the next half hour. Then proceed to the final cooking, either simmering or steaming. Some recipes have you put your potatoes into cold salted water before bringing them to the boil. An elaborate Swedish study has shown that potatoes cooked this way produce a stickier final mash and sometimes develop an odd flavor.

Last night I tested four versions of mashed potato on my guests. The precooked version came in first. It was smooth, not gummy, and had a robust earthy potato taste. The runner-up had been boiled in salted water in the usual manner. It verged on the pasty but tasted good. The other candidates were hopeless.

Mashing Your Potato. Mash immediately after you drain the potato slices. The goal here is to separate the cells without rupturing them, and the perfect temperature for achieving this is about 180 degrees Fahrenheit. As the potato cools to room temperature, the pectic cement hardens again and many more cells break open when you mash them, spilling out their sticky starchy gel. At 50 degrees half the cells will rupture.

Any cookbook that sanctions the use of a blender or food processor for mashing should be carefully shredded. People who like to use a hand masher because the resulting lumps remind them of their mothers' cooking ignore the fact that this technique repeatedly abuses the already mashed portions of the potato while you seek out the solid pieces that remain. A ricer is best because each potato cell passes through it only once, and all the pressure is applied in a vertical direction. In contrast, a food mill shears more cells apart by scraping them across the screen as you turn the handle, but it is possible that our precooking technique will permit the use of a food mill without fear of gumminess and produce a perfectly smooth result at the same time. Further experimentation lies ahead.

Steamy cooked potatoes should be dried either before or after mashing. You can return the slices to the pan, cover them with a folded kitchen towel, and shake the pan every so often for the next five minutes. Or you can rice the potatoes back into their pan and stir over low heat for a minute or two until a film appears on the bottom of the pan. Use a softly rounded wooden spoon. Be gentle.

Enriching Your Potato. How much butter you add is your business. I find that a stick of butter for every two pounds of potatoes (serves four to six) is a bit austere but that Robuchon overdoes it with three or four. If you beat in the butter first and then hot milk or cream (over low heat), you can achieve any consistency you like, from runny to stiff, but if you do it the other way round, it is hard to know how much milk to add. Georges Blanc advises incorporating the butter right away, keeping the potatoes warm, and adding heavy cream at the last minute. If you hold mashed potatoes for a while over warm, not simmering, water, don't cover the pan completely or the flavor will turn on you and gumminess set in.

Should your butter be very hard or very soft when you beat it in? Do you dare to use a whisk? (Michel Guérard says never.) Do waxy and new potatoes precook successfully? Is steaming better than boiling?

At present I am at a complete loss for answers to these remaining questions. My next set of experiments begins tonight, and I will not be altogether happy with my mashed potatoes until the whole truth comes out. ♠

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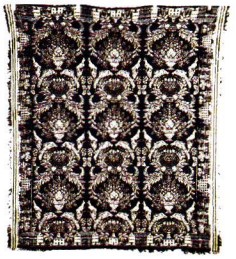
Sleepers Awake

Margot Guralnick investigates the great American coverlet

Long before the days of the decorator, household upholstery and fabrics served as beacons distinguishing the old guard from the up-and-coming. Colonial Americans of means snubbed the native homespun used by their neighbors and bought all their cloth goods (down to their bloomers) from British trade ships. Such was the status of imported bed curtains that they were listed in wills alongside silver and landholdings. But as trade relations with England grew increasingly strained and the quality of native cotton improved, it became customary, and eventually essential, for every family to have its own spinning wheel, dye vat, and rudimentary loom. With this equipment women fought off the chill of their drafty bedrooms by creating coverlets in bold geometric patterns.

Named after the French *couvre-lit*, meaning bedcover, these cotton-and-wool constructions are always woven and therefore easily distinguishable from quilts, which are pieced together with needle and thread. Due to the narrow width of household looms, however, coverlets were often made by joining two panels with a flying stitch. According to a Southern wives' tale, the ones with uneven seams kept the evil spirits at bay. Most, nevertheless, were painstakingly matched down the center.

The course of coverlet weaving in America changed dramatically in the 1820s with the arrival from France of Joseph Marie Jacquard's laborsaving loom attachment. Activated by a chain of punched cards that look like player-piano rolls, this complex mechanism made it possible to produce what was a week's work in a day. More important, the Jacquard enabled coverlet designers to venture beyond the strictly geometric and experiment with curvilinear forms. The result was an exuberant outburst of patriotic mottoes, swooning birds, and voluptuous blossoms.



The Jacquard device also ended the heyday of the housewife as weaver. Expensive and too tricky for amateurs to operate, these improved looms became the province of skilled professionals, virtually all of whom were men. Most had recently emigrated from Europe, where mechanization was sweeping the textile industry.

Mobs of disgruntled weavers from the British Isles set-

Clockwise from top right: Peacock-embellished detail of a Pennsylvania coverlet, c. 1840, from Connie Hayes. Ohio coverlet, c. 1840, bordered in the Christian and Heathen pattern, from Cora Ginsburg. Midwestern coverlet, c. 1840, of birds feeding their young, from Melinda Ventre. An 1830 floral coverlet with patriotic base by Archibald Davidson, from Melinda Ventre. French walnut sleigh bed, c. 1840, from Pierre Deux, NYC, with coverlets from Hirschl & Adler Folk. Border of an 1843 New York coverlet by Harry Tyler, whose signature lion appears in the corner block, from Hirschl & Adler Folk.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: RITA MAAS (5); LARS KLOVE

tled in New York and New Jersey during the 1830s and began evolving a distinct style of double-weave coverlet (characterized by two mirror-image layers of cloth) in blue and white or red and white, famous for their boldly graphic designs. Among the most celebrated are Harry Tyler's vigorous floral patterns framed with fruit trees and anchored in two corners by his trademark stalwart lion as well as the year and his customer's name.

Transplanted German weavers, during this same period, typically followed their countrymen to Pennsylvania and Maryland, where they developed a tradition of making multicolored single-weave coverlets. Borrowing motifs from the decorations painted on their native pottery and furniture, these artisans saw to it that their customers slept under swirling kaleidoscopic arrays of roses, fanciful peacocks, and full-blown hearts.

Few patterns, however, remained exclusive to a single state or locale, since by the mid nineteenth century, Jacquard coverlet designs could be purchased through mail order. Weavers themselves were also known to travel. To escape the encroaching competition from power-operated mills and factories, many headed for Ohio and Indiana, where coverlet manufacturing flourished under a hodgepodge of influences. Christian and Heathen, an 1840s pattern that delighted Midwesterners, features a New England townscape infiltrated by Chinese pagodas and palm trees.

The fashion for Jacquard coverlets raged from 1830 to 1870, a period when most weavers worked with wool spun and dyed at home by their customers. Indigo was the best source for colorfast blue, though it had to be dissolved in so-called chamber lye—a fancy term for urine. Most reds came from madder, but tiny South American insects, when dried and crushed, produced the precious shade of scarlet called cochineal. Families who couldn't afford to pay weavers in cash—$2.75 was the standard fee for a coverlet—typically bartered for their bedcoverings. William Lowmiller of Lycoming County, Pennsylvania, dyed yarn and wove several coverlets in exchange for firewood and potatoes. Other weavers accepted whiskey and sides of beef. The Civil War, however, brought an abrupt stop to these lively negotiations, since most wool went into making uniforms and blankets. Coverlets were even recruited for use as hospital tablecloths. After the war mass-produced aniline-dyed textiles captured the market, and manually operated Jacquard looms became archaic.

Long overlooked as garish and Victorian, Jacquard coverlets have just begun to attract attention thanks to a recent landmark exhibition at Hirschl & Adler Folk Gallery in New York. Though many were cut up and used as door curtains—or, worse, as ironing-board liners and horse blankets—a good number received heirloom treatment and have weathered the years remarkably well. Fortunately, prices have yet to surge. At antiques shows and estate sales it's still possible to discover fine mid nineteenth century coverlets, free of tears, wear marks, or moth holes—all conditions to be avoided—priced at $500–$1,500. Sought-after motifs such as eagles, trains, and presidential portraits can hike the value to $2,000–$5,000, and top-of-the-line coverlets, signed and dated by recognized masters can go for as much as $10,000–$15,000. Hung on a wall, these textiles add upscale Americana vigor to any room. Draped across a bed, they marry past and present—and they also inspire the warmest and deepest sleep. (For coverlet dealers see Sources.) ♠

Editor: Sarah Kaltman

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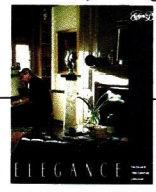

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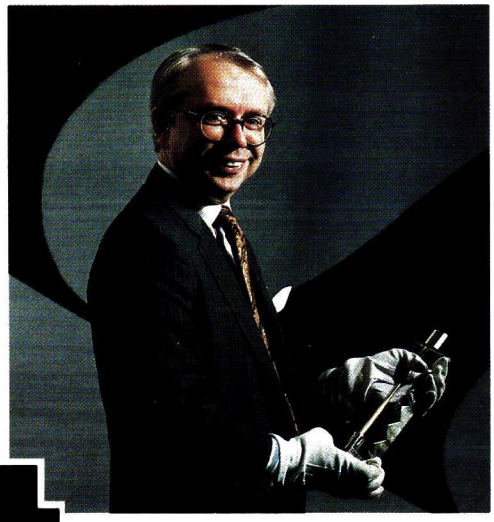


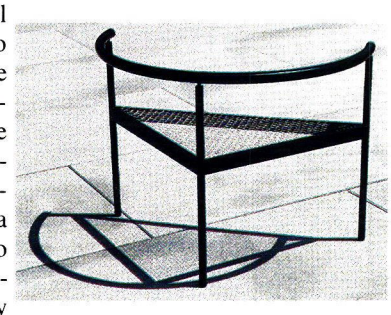
Miller High Style

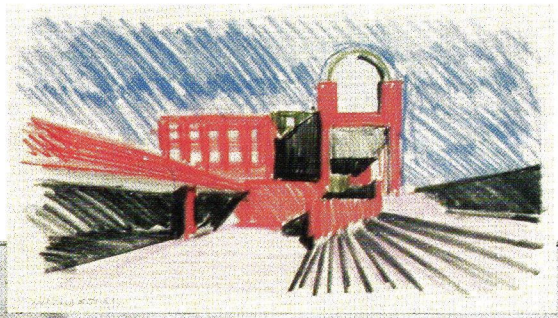
The Met's wily Modern design curator corners the objects of his affection

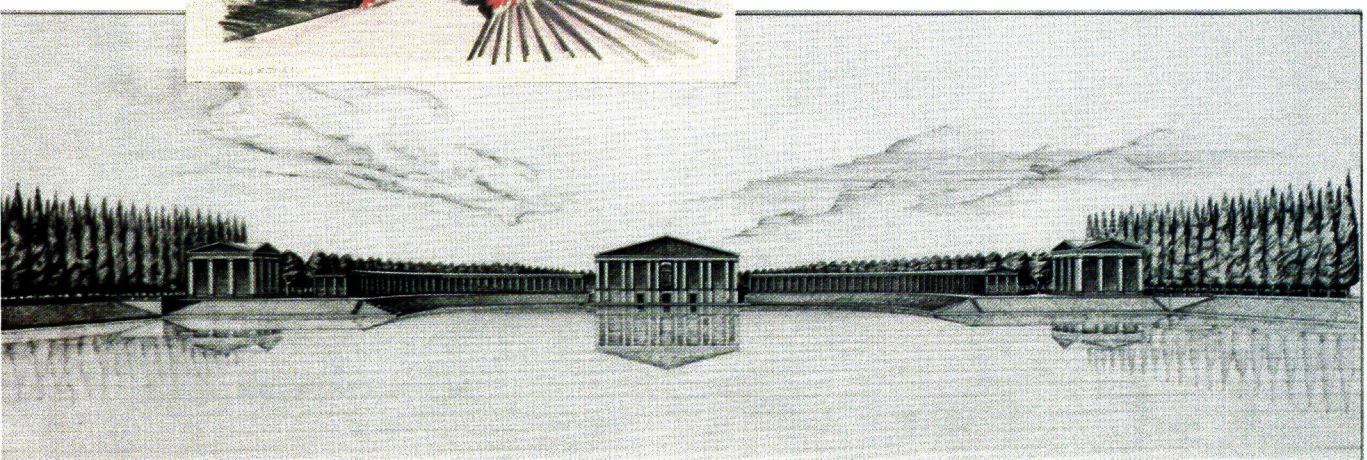
The enterprising R. Craig Miller, associate curator of twentieth-century design and architecture at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, has many competitors but few serious rivals. The past year has seen much movement among the city's other design curators. Stuart Wrede was named director of the Museum of Modern Art's department of architecture and design last March. Christopher Wilk, a rising star in the profession, left an associate curator's post at the Brooklyn Museum to become assistant keeper of twentieth-century furniture and interior design at London's prestigious Victoria and Albert Museum. And Dianne Pilgrim, Wilk's old boss at Brooklyn, has been appointed director of the Cooper-Hewitt, the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Design. Through all this change Miller has been quietly but aggressively forging ahead with his impressive acquisitions program, the most recent results of which are currently on view at the Met in two small but superb exhibitions.

The wide writ the Met established for itself from the early days of this century has helped. It now commands an almost unsurpassable head start in the inclusive approach now favored among many historians of the decorative arts. The galleries of the MOMA design collection, locked into an orthodox definition of Modernism, are virtually unchanged from the way they were twenty years ago. The Cooper-Hewitt's inadequate physical plant has made acquisitions a troublesome issue. Brooklyn has neither the funds nor prestige to make a serious bid for the best. Only the Met among the New York museums has the cash, clout, and catholic scope to put together what is becoming this country's definitive modern design survey.

Miller's industriousness is evident in the two simultaneous shows: one, the second in a series of objects from the permanent collection, replaces the selection that had been up since the opening of the twentieth-century wing in early 1987; the other show highlights the museum's growing archive of modern architectural renderings. Since the Met is already strong in many areas—French Art Deco, Scandinavian Moderne, European silver and glass—Miller has moved decisively into postwar American, Italian, and Japanese Modern and Postmodern design, as well as studio crafts to round out his holdings to an encyclopedic scope. From the sinewy handmade wooden settee of Sam Maloof to the anorectic metal seating of Mario Botta, from the knockdown plywood chair of Joe Colombo to the silver and semiprecious-stone tea service of Mario Bellini, the installation is testimony to a broad-minded but sharp-eyed impresario. Miller's pick of architectural drawings, prints, and books is equally discerning. Among them are a richly detailed perspective of a Venetian palazzo by the nineteenth-century French architect Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, sketches by Frank Lloyd Wright for the Coonley Kindergarten in Illinois, and several prime works by Michael Graves, who almost single-handedly revived the art of architectural drawing during the 1970s. It all adds up to a veritable blueprint of our times, underscoring Miller's role as a masterful builder himself. **Martin Filler**







R. Craig Miller, top left, with 1987 Sottsass candlestick and 1977 Jan Yoors tapestry. Above: Chair by Shigeru Uchida, 1973. Left: Les Temples du Lac, Paris, by Ricardo Bofill, 1982. Inset: L.A.'s MOCA, by Arata Isozaki, 1983.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: MARK JENKINSON (2); COURTESY METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART (2)

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The Good Side of Bad Taste

Herbert Muschamp defends lava lamps and other ugly stuff

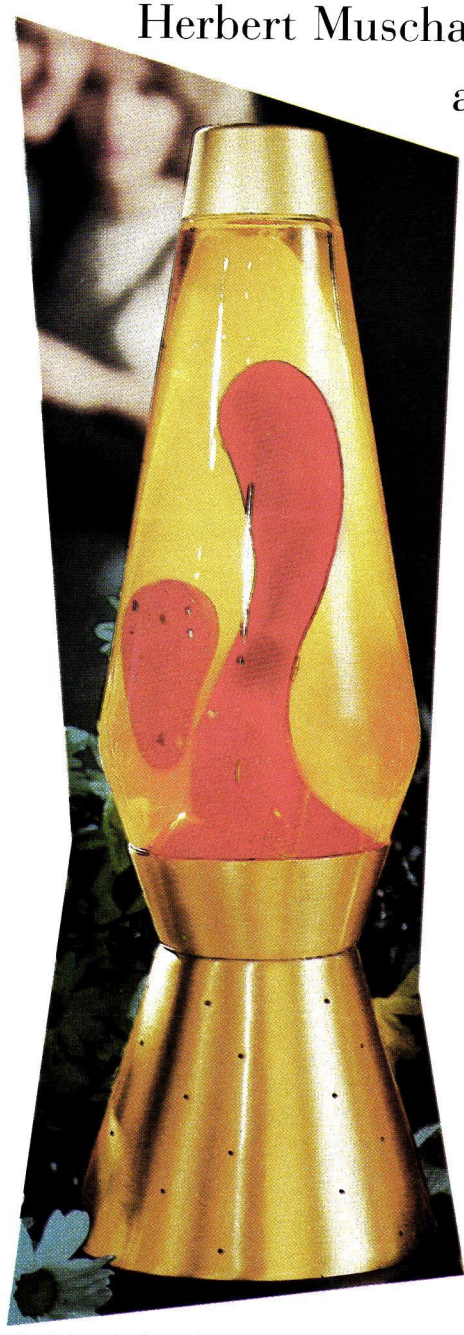
"Taste belongs in the mouth," one of my design instructors used to say, his lip curled with all the contempt a Modernist could muster. The target of his scorn wasn't bad taste or good taste; it was the very idea of Taste, the fickleness of subjective preference.

What was his problem? Why was taste so distasteful to Modern architects and designers? Granted, they had a revolutionary ambition—to endow architecture with the cool, efficient objectivity that technology was thought to possess. But as heirs of the Enlightenment, Modernists were also answering a deep philosophical need: to substitute the rule of reason for the capriciousness of faith.

Taste, to us, may be mainly a device for ending tiresome arguments over the color to paint a room or the selection of a sofa—chacun à son goût, we say with a sigh—but two hundred years ago taste was a subject on which arguments raged among the best minds of Europe. To Enlightenment thinkers, taste was as important an issue as the nature of reality or truth. Taste was fundamental to the whole Enlightenment enterprise of erecting a rationally organized society.

To some philosophers, taste was a form of unconscious reasoning. The purpose of aesthetics was to make this a conscious process. The new "science of perception" presumed that there were laws governing visual experience comparable to those Newton had formulated for the behavior of moving objects. Given adequate cultivation of the senses, reasonable men would surely agree on which pictures were good or bad, which rooms beautiful or ugly.

To advocates of Modernism, it seemed that architects and designers had finally succeeded in shaping the environment according to a universal standard of reason. Aesthetics, after all, had concerned itself exclusively with art objects that had no utilitarian value. Functionalism dispensed with the entire issue by creating an architecture in which form and utility were one. Here was a style of architecture that was not really a style, one whose visual form reflected not subjective preference for the way buildings ought to look but the bare facts of how they stood up. And it was an international style: Modernism was reason made manifest at last over the entire globe.



The problem was that by the time this heroic undertaking had made headway, reason was losing its reputation as the salvation of mankind. A gamut of twentieth-century horrors—not only the sterile glass-box city but also the threat of nuclear apocalypse—had been laid at the door of the house of reason. Science and technology were no longer liberators but tyrants worthy of the ancien régime.

That is why, about twenty years ago, bad taste began to take on a positive cultural connotation. A kaleidoscopic ideal of pluralism replaced the uniform aesthetic of good design. First Susan Sontag lauded camp, and suddenly you couldn't buy a Tiffany lampshade without taking on a second mortgage. A few years later Robert Venturi came out for "messy vitality over obvious unity." Then John Margolies scandalized the Architectural League's Modern faithful with an exhibition of the Miami Beach hotel architecture of Morris Lapidus. Then the gates opened to a flood of raucous images which continues to cascade before our dazzled eyes: the Las Vegas strip, Googie coffee shops, Graceland, the Madonna Inn, the film sets of John Waters and Jonathan Demme, boomerang Formica, lava lamps, fiber-optic flowers, the gilded excess of the Spellings and the Trumps, William Eggleston's color photographs of tastefully tasteless interiors, Kenny Scharf's Day-Glo paintings, Izhar Patkin's Polynesian curtains, Nathalie du Pasquier's fabrics, plastic laminates by Ettore Sottsass.

To place a value on all of these images of bad taste is not to advocate hideousness. It is to recall visual culture to the Enlightenment ambition to free us from oppressive dogmas, including those with which we restrict ourselves. "What is intoxicating about bad taste," wrote Baudelaire, "is the aristocratic pleasure of not pleasing." Baudelaire's was an aristocracy not of wealth or class but of mind, the elite of those who recoil from received ideas. It turns out that there are no universal laws of visual expression. There are conventions that change from culture to culture, season to season, house to house. And although these conventions are all fascinating to explore, we don't want to trap our minds within a single configuration. We want the freedom to move with ease between the house of reason and the home of instinct. We want a place for everything—but not necessarily everything in its place. ♠

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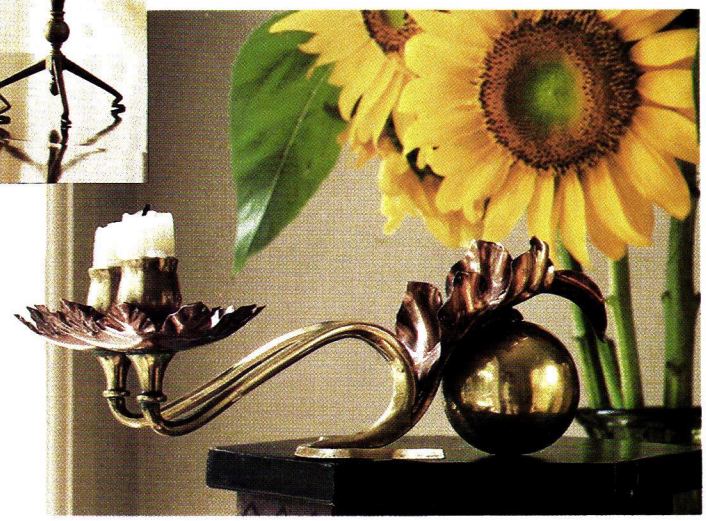
Benson's Burners

The lighting of an Art Nouveau master comes out of the shadows

One of the most neglected areas in nineteenth- and twentieth-century decorative arts has been lighting fixtures made of nonprecious metals. Thus it's remarkable that several vanguard collectors and astute museum curators have shown new interest in W. A. S. Benson, a long-forgotten master of lighting and the leading English designer of metalwork candlesticks, lamps, sconces, and ceiling lights during the early days of electrical illumination. Though less famous than his great mentor, William Morris, or his increasingly esteemed contemporary Christopher Dresser, Benson is now considered a leading figure in the Arts and Crafts movement. The well-educated William Arthur Smith Benson (1854–1924), son of a well-to-do barrister, was in the same class at Oxford as Oscar Wilde. There he came under the influence of Morris, who urged him to take up metalworking. His choice of career, though unconventional for someone of his upper-middle-class background, indicates the rising prestige that the industrial arts enjoyed during the Aesthetic period. Yet Benson was no back-to-basics craftsman. Unlike some of his naive contemporaries, he had an acute sense of who his audience was. He opened a smart shop on London's Bond Street, sent his pieces to be sold at Samuel Bing's influential Maison de l'Art Nouveau in Paris, and eventually became managing director of Morris & Co., for which he also designed furniture, wallpaper, and accessories.

By W. A. S. Benson, clockwise from top, pair of candlesticks, mantel candlestick, candelabra variants, oil lamps and candlesticks.



Benson's undeserved obscurity is in part because of the deceptively low-key quality of his schemes. Generally executed in brass and copper, sometimes silver-plated, they are less showy and elaborate than other Art Nouveau metalwork produced in Britain during Benson's peak years of 1880 to 1914. And compared with the flamboyant *lampadaires* of his French and Belgian counterparts, his designs appear positively austere. Unlike Dresser, who went in for forms bursting with animal vitality, Benson was a virtuoso of the sinuous line; it was the difference between a pipe organ and a violin. Functionally forthright and cleanly modeled, Benson's objects possess a gracefulness that epitomizes Art Nouveau at its purest, freed from the confusion and sentimentality that made much of the convoluted "wet noodle style" merely silly. A daring sculptor, Benson was adept at the formal control that allowed him to carry off bold proportions and unexpected twists and turns. Dresser insisted that all ornament taken from nature must be stylized; Benson used many naturalistic motifs but stopped well short of direct representation, even though his utilitarian objects are alive with luxuriant tendrils, leaves, and petals.

Ingeniously constructed, delicate but durable, and marvelously original, Benson's designs have such lively sculptural interest that they are virtually a medium unto themselves when measured against most other fin de siècle metalwork. One suspects that for those who have snapped up so much of this artist's output in recent years, the burden of living with these extraordinary creations is no more onerous than inhabiting rooms full of exotic orchids. Benson at his best cultivated some precious hybrids indeed. **Martin Filler**

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Holder shown smaller than actual size.

Tree shown smaller than actual size of 13¾".

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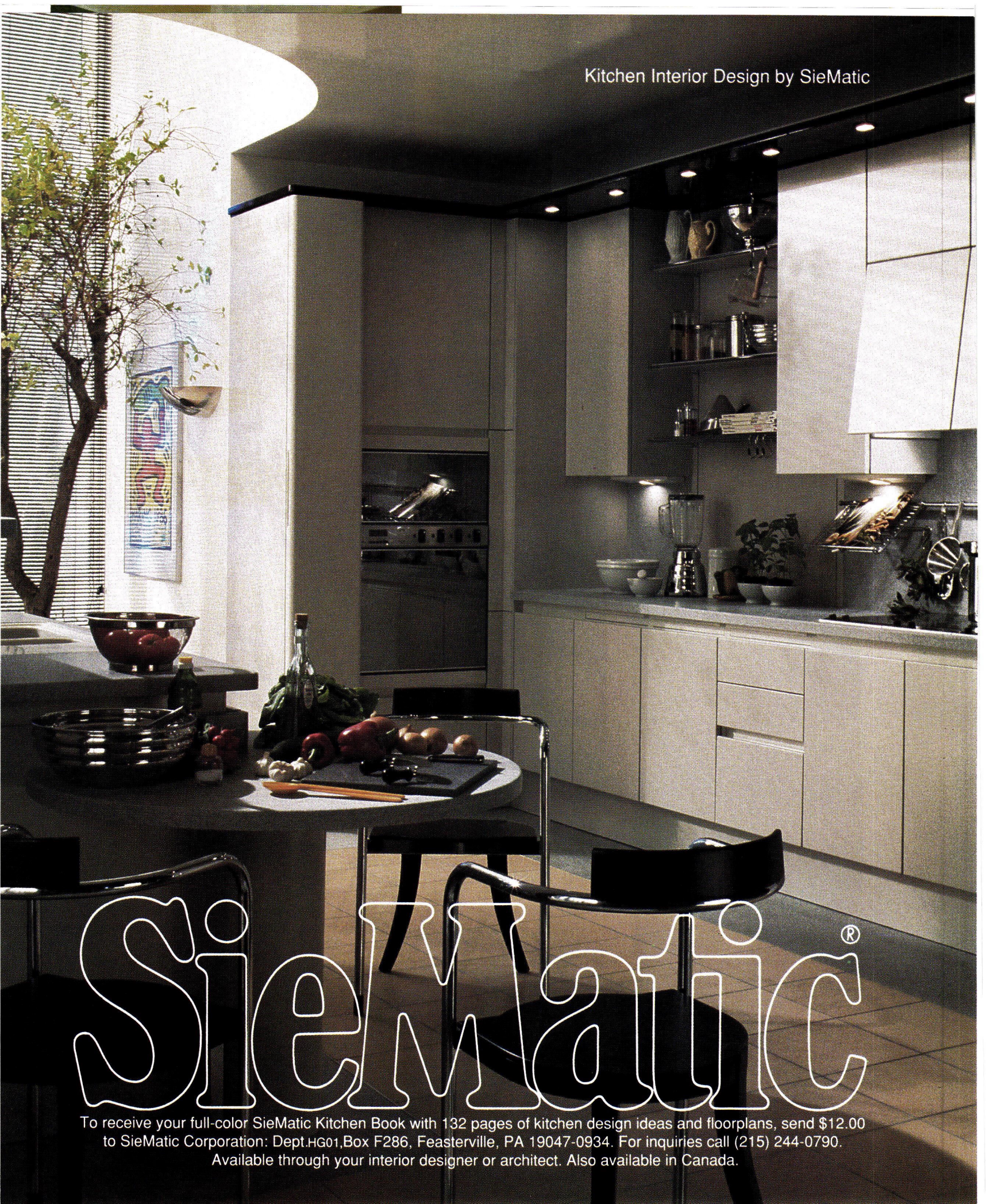
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EDITOR'S PAGE

JANUARY 1989

This month marks the debut of a new kind of decorating feature for HG. Our story Playing with Fire presents five very different ways to dress up a mantel. If this sounds alarmingly homespun, you will be further surprised to know that I have no shame about using the currently unfashionable term "decorating." Interior design—though I admit to resorting to it in weaker moments—seems to me a circumlocution. What's wrong with decorating? Isn't it the most logical and personal extension of connoisseurship? Who doesn't want the perfect painting or object—and who *does* feel that the prize is fully won before it has found its perfect spot at home? A final word: decorating, as we see it, isn't about buying a complete look. It's more a case of embellishing and that cringe-provoking verb "personalizing" than adhering reverentially to the chapter and verse of someone else's scheme. There's lots that is highly personal in this issue, from the white expanses of Joan Vass's midtown Manhattan loft to the venerable comforts of Tom Fallon's Greenwich Village apartment. Dick Dumas in Provence, Ann Holden in New Orleans, and Adriano Magistretti in Rome were their own decorators and clients. Ned Tanen worked with a decorator but layered on the things he loves—the most modern way to work with a professional, we think. The point is to make it your own. We're here to fan the flames of desire for that last refuge—your home.

A mantel painted purple against yellow satin walls, part of HG's new look at the hearth. Page 132.

MICHAEL MUNDY

Nancy Novogrod

Editor in Chief

Guarding the dining room, a wood horse built from skids found on New York streets by artist Gene Vass, the designer's ex-husband. Bleached fir wood floors, white walls, and high windows provide a light and airy setting for Vass's kilims, plants, and sculptures. Details see Sources.

Vass Horizons

•

"The world abounds with wonderful stuff," says fashion designer Joan Vass. Jonathan Etra visits her Manhattan loft and sees what she means

DEBORAH TURBEVILLE

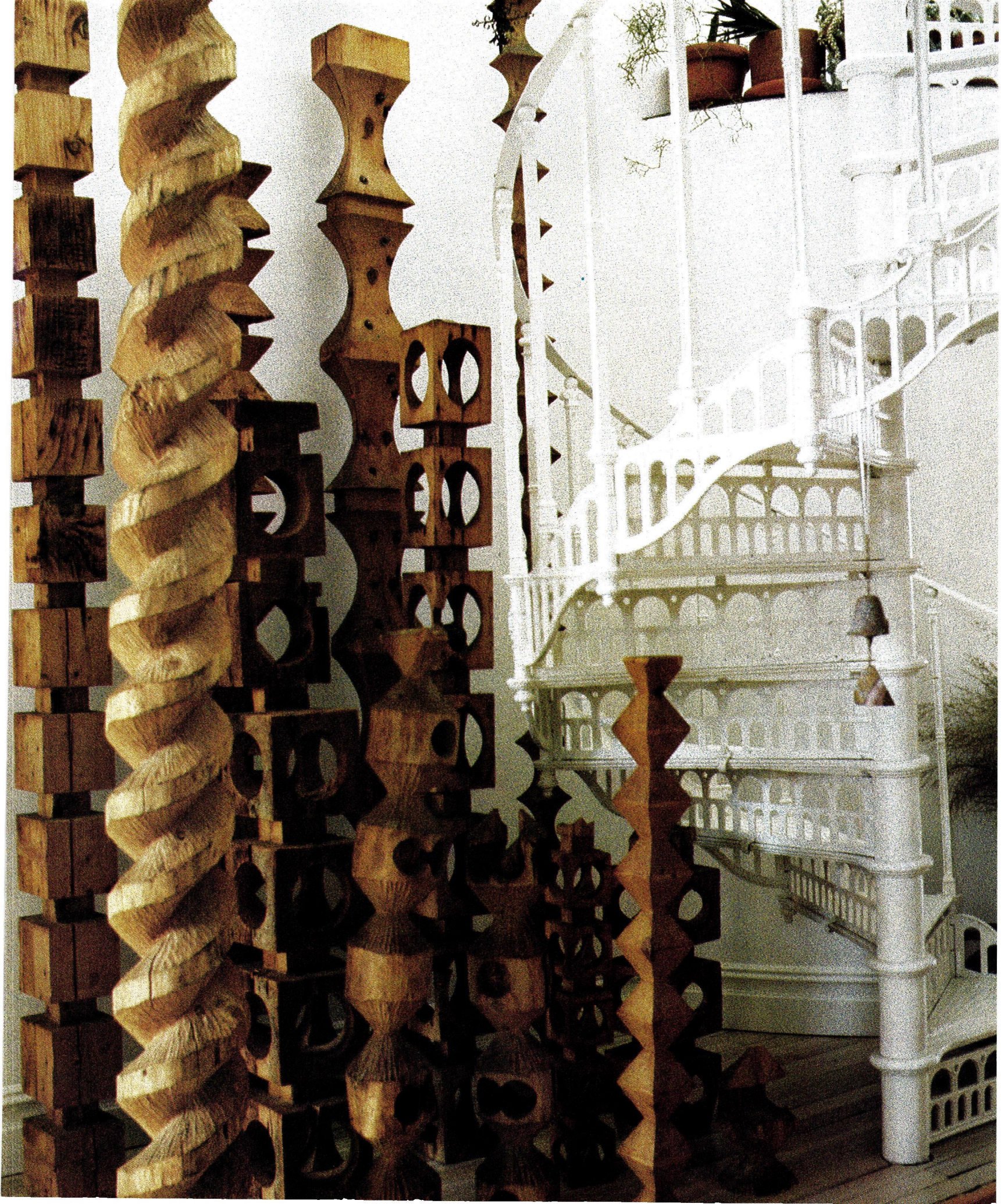
On a child's stool perhaps large enough for a cup, Joan Vass sits, knees together, arms locked in front, chin on hands, slowly folding in on herself like a neutron star or an origami elf. A fashion designer of great influence and success, Vass makes no effort to live fashionably. Her New York loft, where we are talking now, is in a nondescript building surrounded by Indian food stores, welfare hotels, and a Con Edison facility. Once a factory, the loft had since been shrouded with carpets and draperies. Vass bleached the floors almost white and uncovered cement rectangles—originally used to support machinery—which she had painted to look like patterned rugs. "You have to solve your problems or leave them," she explains. Few problems seem left.

I have the most peculiar feeling, though, that Vass would like to disappear. She is an odd amalgam of modesty, self-effacement, and confidence. She quotes Beau Brummell: " 'If you notice me, I am not well dressed.' Beau had the right idea." Simplicity characterizes Vass. "I live very simply. The word is 'plain.' " She is dressed in a black-and-white sweater and black skirt. The clothes she designs are never fussy. "I make the clothes I've wanted all my life—easy-to-wear and comfortable clothes for modern women." The loft, like Vass's other creations, is simple and clear.

But simplicity is deceptive. "At a party where everyone is overdressed, the woman in plain black or white commands all eyes." Vass is hiding to be found out. "I'm an isolated figure in fashion. I'm not in the mainstream." Her goals are more profound: "My intention in the house as well as my work is to rise above fashion and trend, to enter a world that lasts. Style is something that lasts." Vass has set herself no mean task. But she's quite up to it—she is indeed possessed. Her hair is gray, her soft round face indented by concern. "I work all the time. I would get into a lot of trouble if I didn't work. My mind would go completely." *(Text continued on page 150)*

A forest of wooden geometric columns, right, by Gene Vass flank a metal staircase that leads up to the penthouse. Above: A Baroque putto is suspended from the skylight. Antique wood doors open onto a coat closet. Left: Vass, in her living room, holds a 19th-century ironstone cup and saucer with chinoiserie influence.

DEBORAH TURBEVILLE

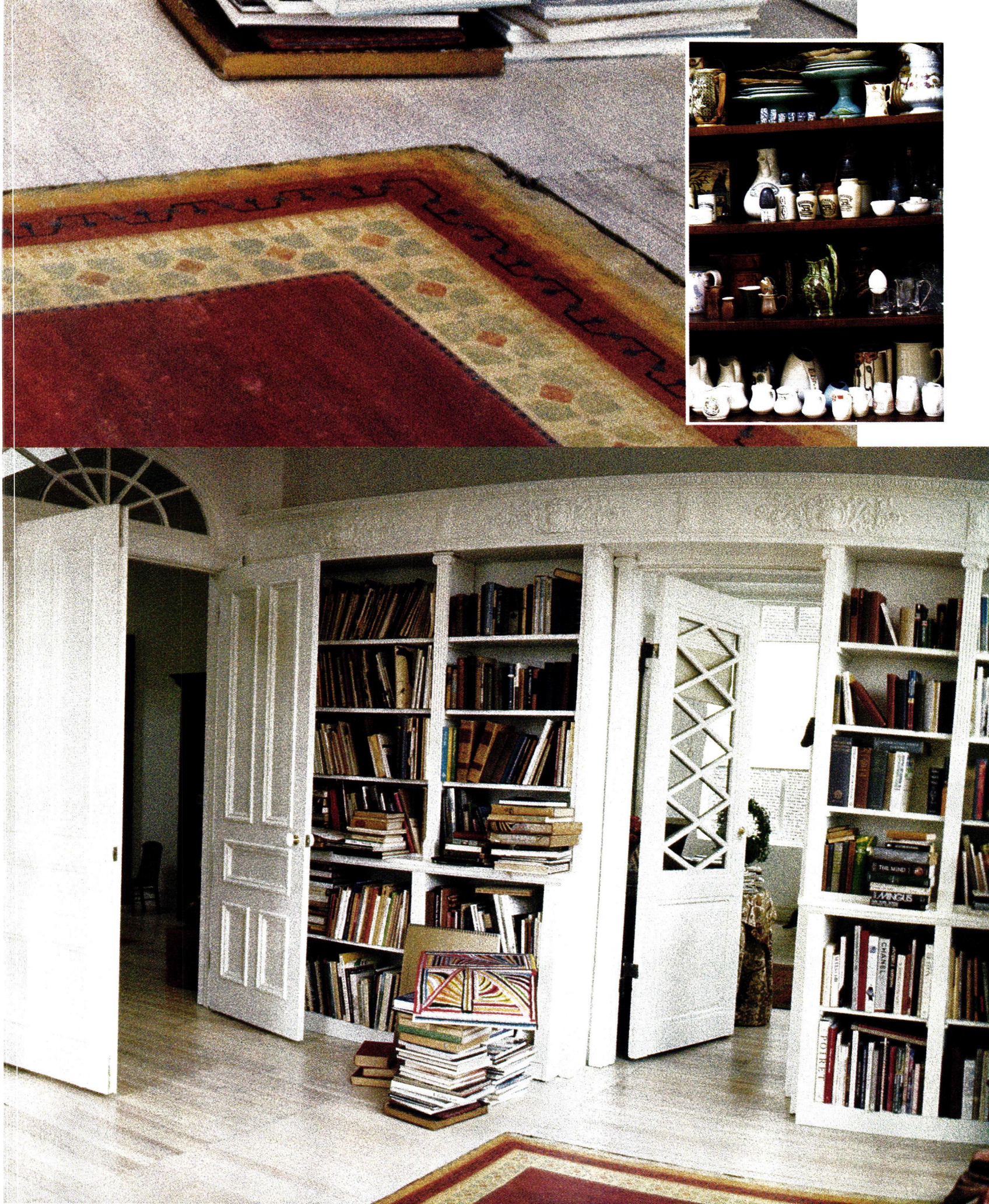


The metal-and-glass Art Deco table, which Vass found on one of her trips to Connecticut, holds some of her white antique pitchers and cobalt blue glass from the 1930s. Resting on the lip of an American pine cupboard, filled with more pitchers from her large collection, is a striking Fornasetti tray. At left are some of Vass's institutional wooden chairs from Schlapp Mobel—very comfortable and "I love things that stack," she says.

DEBORAH TURBEVILLE

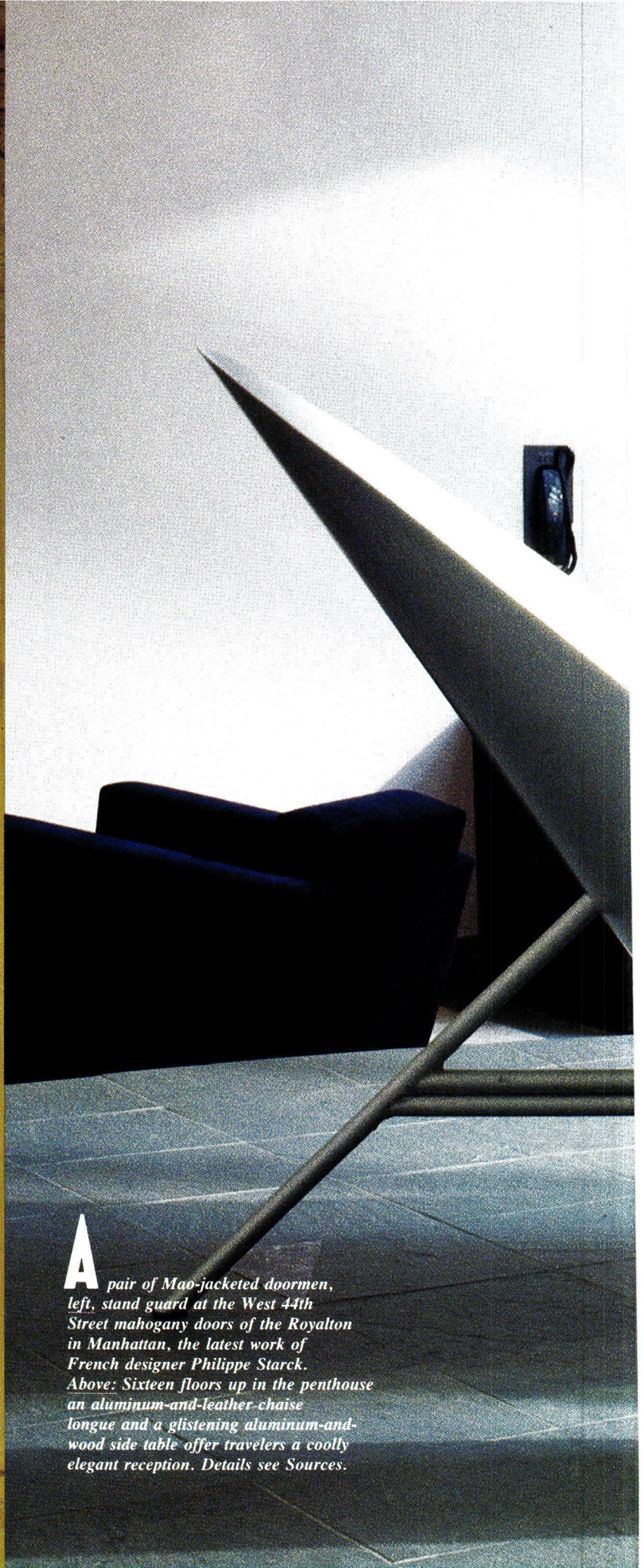
Books in the library, below, reside in white-painted wood drugstore shelves. Right: The cement squares, left behind from the loft's factory days, were so unsightly that Vass had artist Karen Lukas paint them to resemble rugs. Inset: Vass's eclectic collection of ceramic, china, majolica, and ironstone were gifts from friends and family—or the hard-won booty of secondhand rummagings.

DEBORAH TURBEVILLE


THE MIND
MENCIS
CHANEL
MARLOT

In the bedroom, right, characteristically piled with books (Vass is a passionate late-night reader), a bed of her own design with a favorite Mexican tray. The chair, reupholstered in Clarence House fabric, once belonged to Vass's parents. To the left, a miniature inlaid Italian chest. Above: A view of the Chrysler Building from the rooftop garden.

DEBORAH TURBEVILLE



A pair of Mao-jacketed doormen, left, stand guard at the West 44th Street mahogany doors of the Royalton in Manhattan, the latest work of French designer Philippe Starck. Above: Sixteen floors up in the penthouse an aluminum-and-leather chaise longue and a glistening aluminum-and-wood side table offer travelers a coolly elegant reception. Details see Sources.

MICHAEL MUNDY

THE ROYALTON TREATMENT

Charles Gandee checks in to the hippest new hotel in Manhattan

Among the things that Steve Rubell and Ian Schrager are sure of—and Steve Rubell and Ian Schrager are sure of a great many things—is that in order to succeed in Manhattan, a hotel must offer its guests more than luxury, convenience, amenity, design, style, and service. What more could a hotel possibly offer, you ask. Attitude. Lots of attitude.

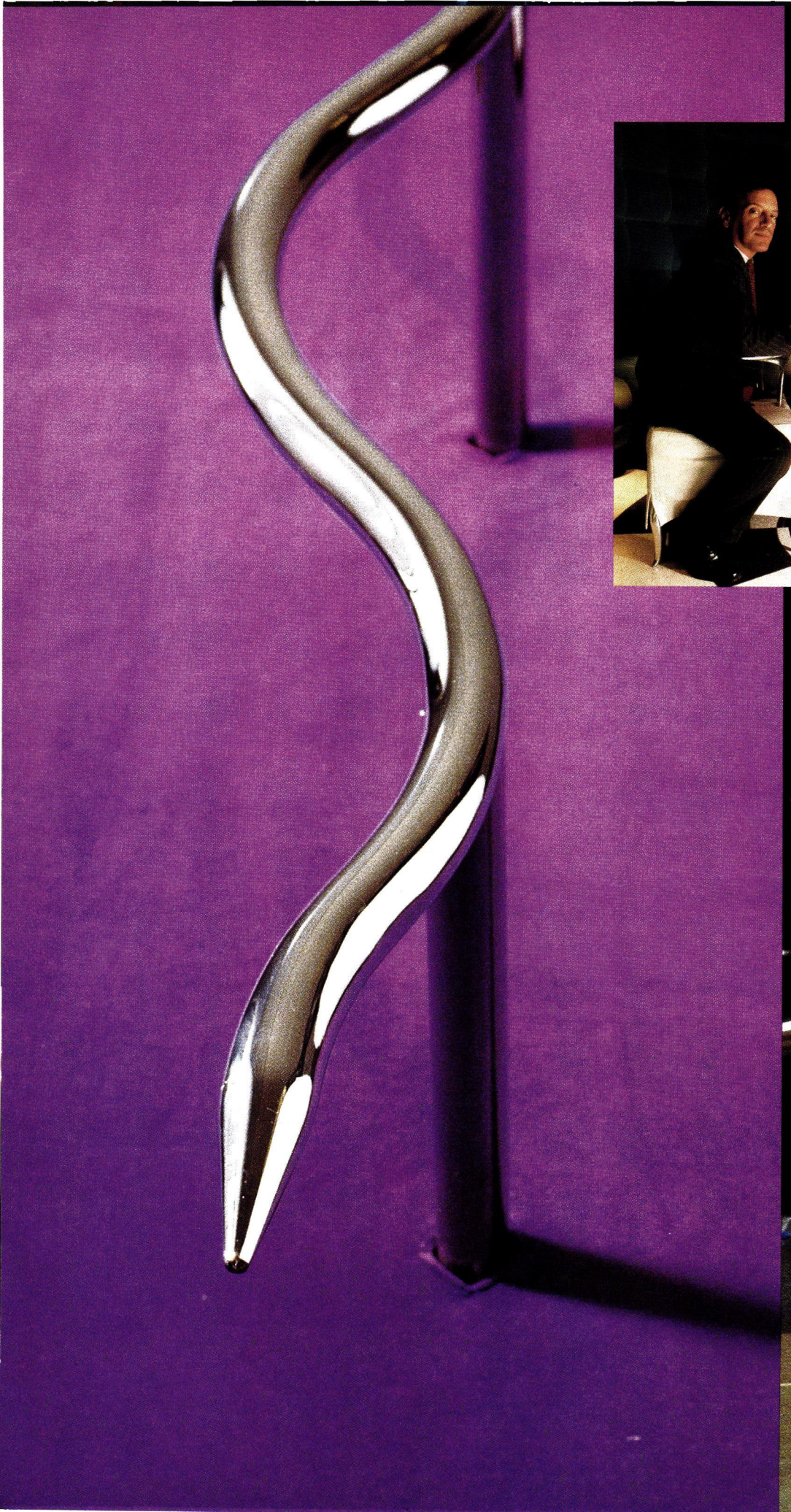
"In a nightclub people will tolerate almost anything, in a hotel people will tolerate almost nothing," reports Schrager, who knows all about both nightclubs and hotels. He and Rubell not only masterminded such infamous New York pleasure palaces as Studio 54 and Palladium, they are also the proud co-owners of the wildly successful Morgans. Their most recent venture is the Royalton, perhaps the only hotel in Manhattan that stands a chance of eclipsing Morgans's 94 percent occupancy rate.

The secret of Schrager and Rubell's success is their radarlike instinct for what's in and what's out, for what's hot and what's not, for who's hip and who's had it. An aura seems to surround the places they create—an aura that a lot of people find irresistible. "We make magic," explain the partners matter-of-factly.

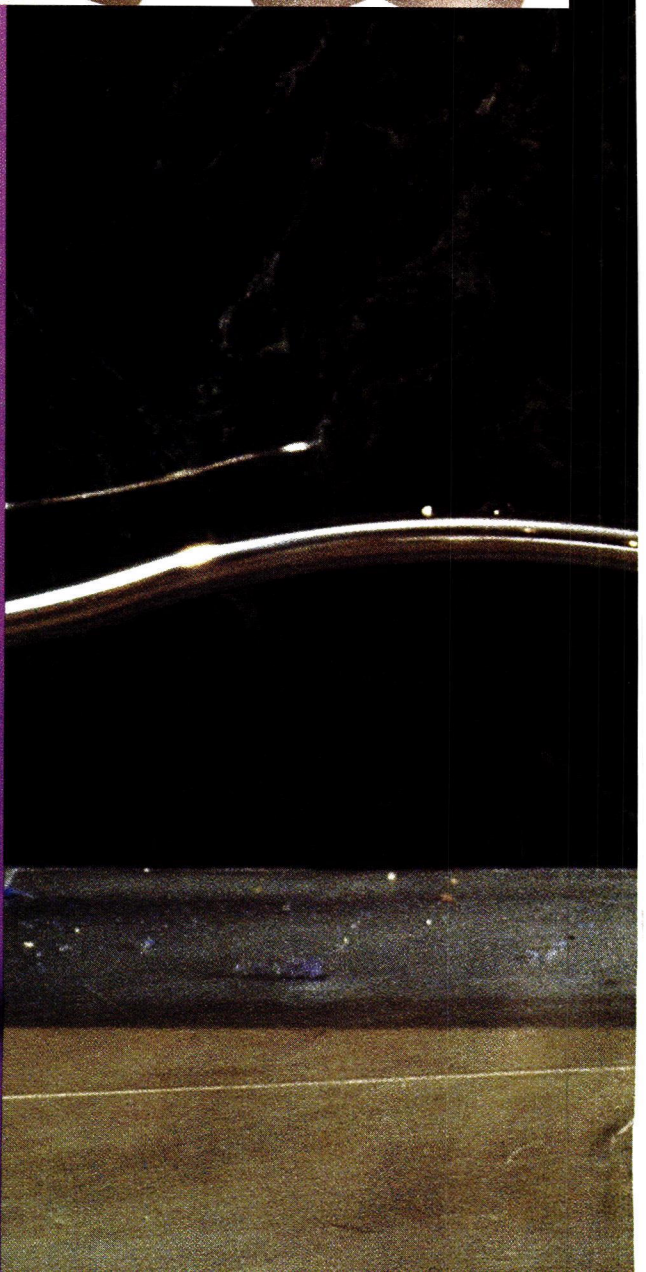
To help cast the spell, Schrager and Rubell tend to enlist the assistance of high-profile aesthetic wizards—for example, French designer Andrée Putman (Morgans) and Japanese architect Arata Isozaki (Pal-

A cobalt blue carpet with a winsome poltergeist motif, opposite, forms a runway-style path through the Royalton's mahogany-lined lobby. Horn-shaped wall sconces create a curious frieze of lights, and cast-aluminum legs give a quirky twist to the traditional seating pieces Starck specified. Above: In one of the deluxe guest suites, a velvet- and silk-cushioned banquette wraps a glass-enclosed alcove that overlooks a permanently tilted midnight-blue lounge chair.

MICHAEL MUNDY



GEORGE LANGE

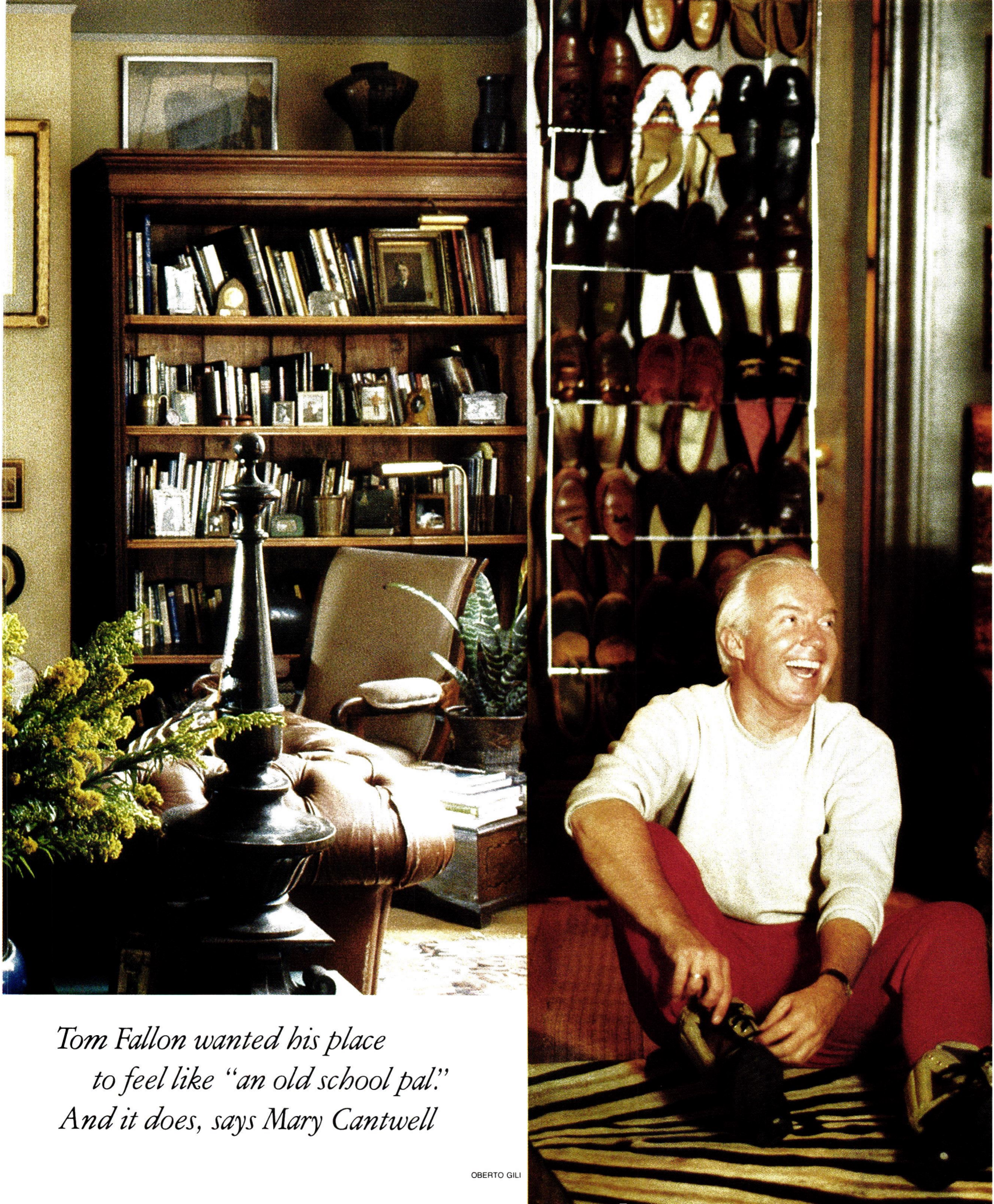


Against the marble backdrop of the restaurant bar, a pair of harpoon-legged aluminum stools, below, stand at the ready. The sinuous line of the snakelike footrail is repeated as a somewhat threatening backrest for a lobby sofa, opposite. Inset: Royalton owners Steve Rubell and Ian Schrager flank designer Philippe Starck.

MICHAEL MUNDY

The living room, "like the well-worn reading room of a men's club." Opposite: Tom Fallon at home.

GENTLEMAN'S QUARTERS



Tom Fallon wanted his place to feel like "an old school pal." And it does, says Mary Cantwell

OBERTO GILI

A wooden screen, left, hides the kitchen. Below: A Dutch marquetry bed, c. 1820, and, on the wall, "two old guys I like together." Opposite: Ivory chopsticks in a bamboo holder and American Impressionist paintings.

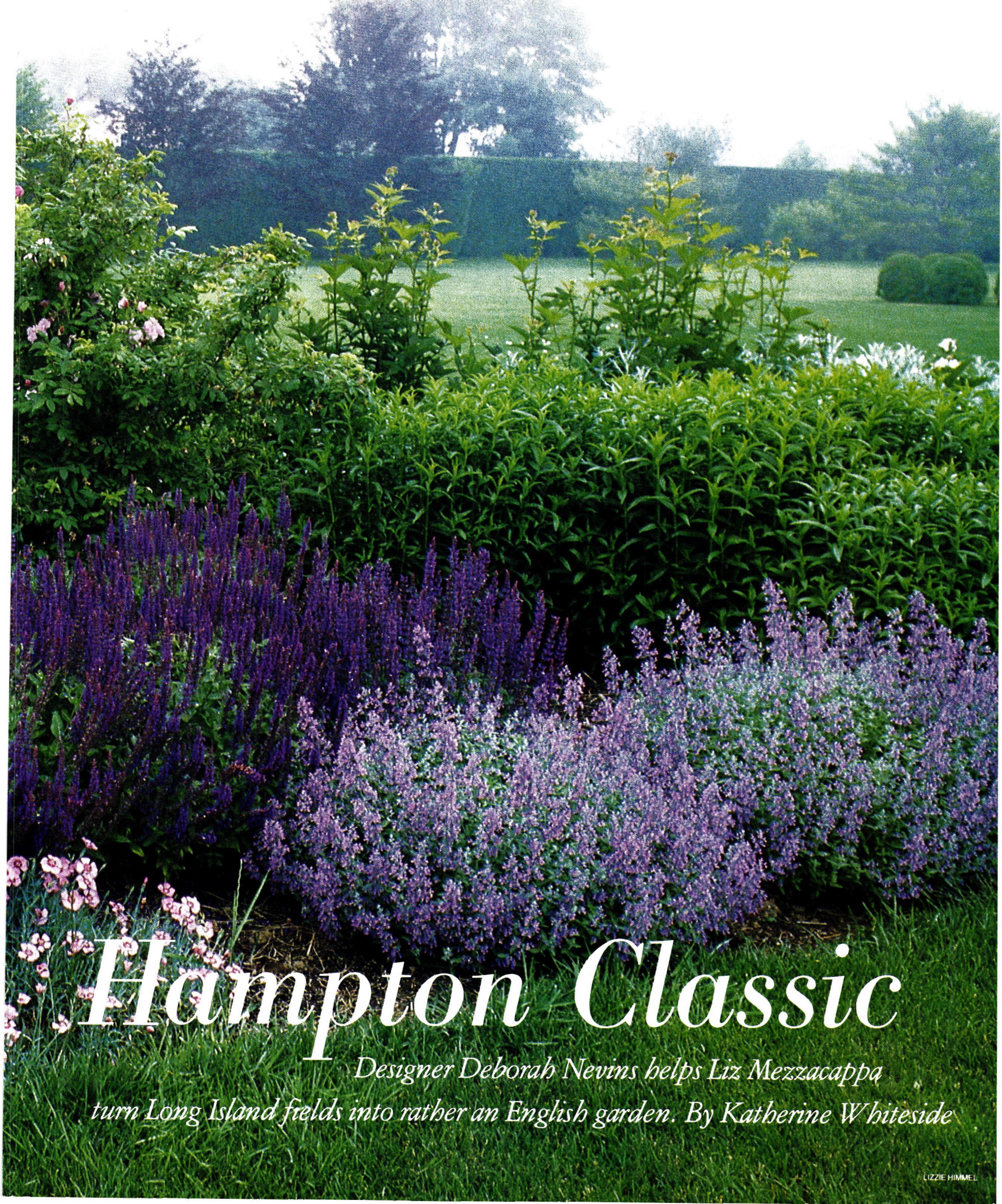
OBERTO GILI

Twenty or so years ago Tom Fallon, who is promotion/advertising director for Bill Blass, bought a pair of mounted albino tortoiseshells in a London antiques shop. When he brought them back to New York, he realized that his apartment—a small studio—couldn't possibly live up to them. So he moved. What else? His next apartment had a baronial fireplace, leaded-glass windows opening onto a garden, and as little furniture as was feasible: king-size mattresses covered with industrial carpeting and set about the platformed living room. That was the way things were in those days. By the time he moved (nineteen years later) to the apartment down the hall, he was "damn tired of it." He wanted sofas, chairs, pictures, rugs—cozy. That's the way things are these days. In some forthcoming history of American decoration, the 1980s will doubtless be touted as the decade in which everybody wanted to come in from the cold.

The three windows in Tom Fallon's living room look out over the treetops of a Greenwich Village street. The fireplace, which is bracketed by those mounted albino tortoiseshells, is slightly smoke-smudged, the leather chesterfield and chair a bit tired, and the Oriental rugs are showing their age. Books and magazines are piled helter-skelter, and a marvelously fusty draft curtain, which looks as if G. K. Chesterton might have owned it last, hangs from wooden rings in the vestibule. That this place was created only yesterday is scarcely believable. One would swear that Tom Fallon had been sitting in the middle of it, slowly accreting possessions, for an eon. And that his great-uncle had sat there for an eon before him.

Tom Fallon's stuff comes from auction rooms, antiques shops, junk shops, yard sales, and, on one memorable day in 1975, from a filthy Chinese warehouse. In the living room, for instance, are family photographs, modern Japanese oils in old frames, a burled-walnut dining table, an unlikely Art Deco-ish settle from Santa Fe, a Biedermeier cabinet, a Sepik River totem pole from New Guinea, a fertility symbol also from New Guinea, a Thai bas-relief, Chinese pottery, assorted animal skins, a length of African fabric, a George IV armchair, a cartoon for a painting of Napoleon leaving for Elba, and eight or ten small oils of Long Island's North Fork by a man named Terrell, who was painting there around 1918. *(Text continued on page 151)*

English-inspired borders in a new Southampton garden include old-fashioned cottage flowers such as low pink Geranium cinereum 'Ballerina' and Dianthus × allwoodii, plumes of 'Bridal Veil' astilbe, spikes of salvia, nepeta, and tall roses.



Hampton Classic

Designer Deborah Nevins helps Liz Mezzacappa turn Long Island fields into rather an English garden. By Katherine Whiteside

LIZZIE HIMMEL

The English flower garden followed the English around the world, and prosperous colonials in Bermuda, India, Africa, and Australia adapted the essential product to new environments and made it their own. Growing up in Melbourne, Liz Mezzacappa was exposed to the Australian version, and she recalls her heritage as she relaxes on the porch of her Southampton house: "Grandmother's garden was completely higgledy-piggledy—mulberry trees festooned with silkworms, rampant passion fruit, frangipani, fig trees, English cottage favorites like poppies, lupines, daphnes, and the most incredible roses. Memories of her garden are dear to me."

Although Liz Mezzacappa's garden is more orderly than her grandmother's polyphyletic jungle, her Australian background shows up in the determination that turned four acres of potato field into a fine garden in four years. "This is our first house and first garden, but I have been planning everything in my head for years," she laughs. "I'm a stubborn perfectionist and willing to try and try again to get something exactly right. My husband has a motto for me—'Often wrong, but never in doubt.' " Liz knew, however, that her horticultural visions needed some down-to-earth expert advice. During a series of gardening lectures at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum, one speaker, Deborah Nevins, particularly caught her attention. "So I just rang her right out of the blue, and we got along immediately."

Nevins straight away put in hedges and brick paths and transplanted almost all the large trees. With the framework complete, it was time to plant. In order to point out exactly where flower beds settled into the new landscape, Liz leaves the wooden porch at the back of her house and walks inside through several rooms to the library and then out French doors onto an end terrace. She smiles and says, "This was one

Graceful gooseneck loosestrife, Lysimachia clethroides, native to China and Japan, thrives in the white garden, left, blooming well if kept moist. Right: Also in the white garden, clouds of baby's-breath, Gypsophila paniculata, float above points of iris leaves, Veronica spicata 'Icicle', and physostegia.

LIZZIE HIMMEL

Chef Panish's audience is treated to a cornucopia of color and shape on the guest side of the "biggest kitchen island known to man," this page and opposite right. Cabinets suspended on steel brackets and fronted by perforated corrugated aluminum hover like sculptural clouds above the counter. Opposite left: Larry Panish encircled by salmon, his favorite fish. Details see Sources.

MICHAEL MUNDY

CHEF'S SPECIAL

Two young architects throw away the recipe for the model kitchen.
By Heather Smith MacIsaac

Move over, Barney Greengrass, the Sturgeon King: here comes Larry Panish, the Lord of Lox. At six feet two inches, Panish is many times bigger than a bread box, but it is unquestionably his outsize personality that this kitchen by Anderson/Schwartz Architects was cooked up for.

A graduate of the other CIA (Culinary Institute of America) and an owner and shaker behind two hopping New York restaurants, Moondance Diner and Lox Around the Clock (soon to be joined by a third, Pipeline), Larry Panish is a master chef who "knows his stuff," says Frederic Schwartz, partner in charge of the project. Naturally that meant working into the plan equipment he's used to, commercial appliances like a Traulsen refrigerator and a Garland stove. "But he's also a guy who lets you go," adds Schwartz appreciatively, meaning Schwartz and project architect Marc L'Italien were able to throw into the pot many an unexpected ingredient. A twenty-foot-long counter made up of a stainless-steel work surface and fifteen different marbles and granites is the centerpiece of what can only be called a chef d'oeuvre of kitchen design. ▲

GEORGE LANGE

OMPOSITION BOOK

On the chef's side of the island, left, the palette is neutral and workmanlike, but the pattern is lively. The squiggly pattern of the sandblasted mirror doors of the cherry cabinets was computer-generated. This page: Marble and granite erode at the edges of the counter to dodge existing steel columns that were stripped and burnished.

MICHAEL MUNDY

In laid-back New Orleans, decorator Ann Holden updates a formerly brooding Victorian house. By Nancy McKeon

ON AUDUBON PLACE

The man sitting next to decorator Ann Holden at the Mardi Gras party couldn't figure her out. All around her the chic women of New Orleans were weighed down with floor-length dresses, major makeup, serious jewelry: Southern womanhood in full feather. And then there was Holden: a little makeup, frizzled hair, and a trim jacket and shirt over a short tight sequined skirt. "He finally said to me, 'You're either very unstylish, or you're the most confident woman in this room,' " Holden says, and you can figure out for yourself what the right answer was.

Holden's Mardi Gras man would be equally baffled by the designer's house in Audubon Place, a turn-of-the-century enclave with Victorian-style houses in lazy laid-back New Orleans. Why, he might wonder, are the antique French chairs in the sitting room hidden beneath slipcovers made of ten dollar a yard off-white canvas? Why is the living room furniture mainly upholstered in cream or beige? And why do the curtains, even in the formal rooms, hang from bare metal pipes? But if he could spend a sunny afternoon in

TINA FREEMAN

"I could cover everything in beige," Ann Holden says. In the sunlit living room, opposite, a creamy elegance prevails with spots of color—paintings, flowers, and favorite objects. Top: The deep russet walls in the sitting room are a rich backdrop for the neutral furnishings: Holden updates her antique chairs with canvas slipcovers designed by Holden & Dupuy. Scalamandré silk curtains hang from raw metal rods. Above left: Pale tones warm the sunroom. Above right: Antique French candlesticks and a new terra-cotta bowl filled with pears.

The floor in the entrance hall, left, is pickled and framed by a stenciled geometric pattern. The iron and faux bronze console table, designed by Holden & Dupuy, incorporates 17th-century Portuguese tiles. Below left: Dried hydrangeas in an antique wood urn, an example of Holden's penchant for muted colors.

one of the front rooms, nestled in one of the overstuffed sofas, he might also wonder why this house of baronial proportions seems so blissfully comfortable.

Languor and sensuality are as New Orleans as zydeco Cajun bands and wrought-iron balconies. Holden, with Ann Dupuy, her partner, has spent the past eleven years translating those qualities into vibrant rooms. And they've done it right at home—half their decorating jobs have been in New Orleans—winning over many of the same ladies who would sooner give up their Mercedes than their Mardi Gras balls.

"Our style doesn't scare people here," Holden explains. "What we've given them is a new look but with their own antiques."

Antiques, specifically French antiques, exert powerful appeal in the heart of this former French territory. Glittery chandeliers and girandoles, fauteuils, and Rococo-style mirrors fill the warehouse-size shops that line Royal Street. If you

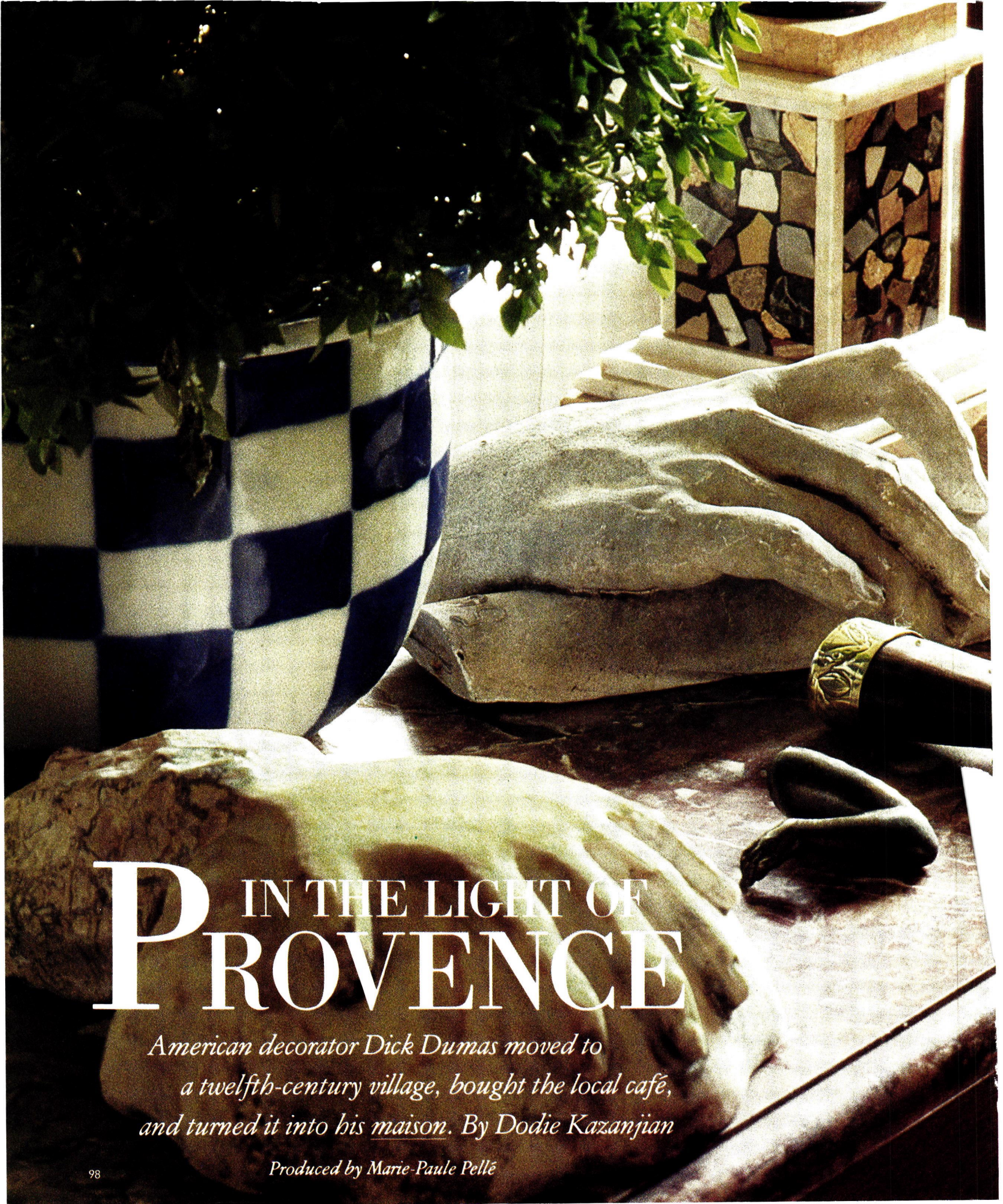
The Holdens' master bedroom, right, painted gray and decked out in off-white cotton piqué, is straightforward but not severe. Through the doorway, a renovated dressing room includes enormous closets between mirrored walls. Below: A comfortable chair in a corner of the bedroom, perfect for reading.

weren't hungry for classic French style before, a stroll down Royal Street will sharpen your appetite. Holden says, "You just don't go out to a store here and buy all new furniture. Everybody has things from their family. Everybody uses antiques."

But, Holden and Dupuy decided, people of their generation also wanted an easy look that would be simpatico with young families. So in the house Holden shares with her stockbroker husband, Jim Reid Holden, and their two "very active" sons, Porter, 11, and Thacher, 9, she de-emphasized some of the heavy architectural details that once made this 1905 house majestic but brooding. "It was real serious Victorian," says Holden. But the wainscoting in the dining room, once dark, is now beige. Ditto for the wide wood molding surrounding the windows. The dark wood floors throughout the first floor are now pale and cool.

The results of this clean *(Text continued on page 151)*

TINA FREEMAN



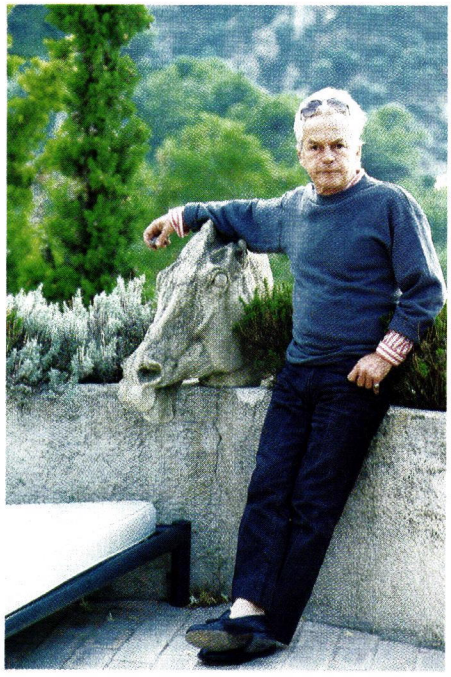
IN THE LIGHT OF PROVENCE

American decorator Dick Dumas moved to a twelfth-century village, bought the local café, and turned it into his maison. By Dodie Kazanjian

Produced by Marie-Paule Pellé

Dumas's collection of hands, in marble, plaster, wood, and metal, left, on an 18th-century Louis XV marble-top table. Above: Blue green entrance doors open to the terrace with its view of the Luberon.

FRANÇOIS HALARD



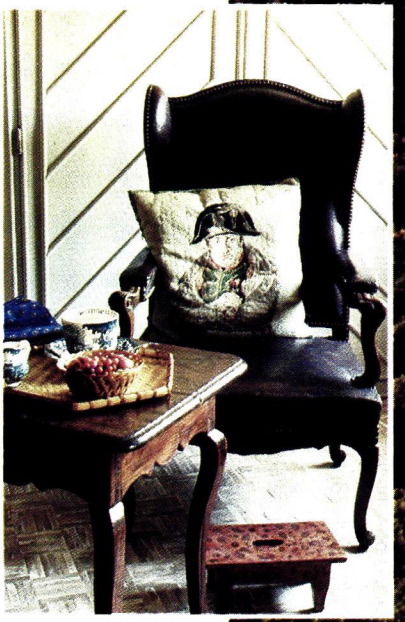
It was love at first sight.'' This is how decorator Dick Dumas describes his meeting with Provence 25 years ago. ''I went to stay with a friend on my way from Paris to the Côte d'Azur and fell violently in love with this dramatic countryside.''

Two years later he bought his first house in Provence, in the Vaucluse, and two and a half years ago he bought his fourth, a ''greasy spoon'' restaurant in Oppède-le-Vieux. ''It had only one thing going for it—a view to die for—and that is really what I bought,'' says Dumas. The view takes in a twelfth-century village and the Luberon, ''a *gentille petite* mountain. Not grand and Swiss. All the houses sit in the shade because the mountain is there, but I see them in that beautiful north light. So I sit on my terrace and look out and it looks like the background of the Mona Lisa.''

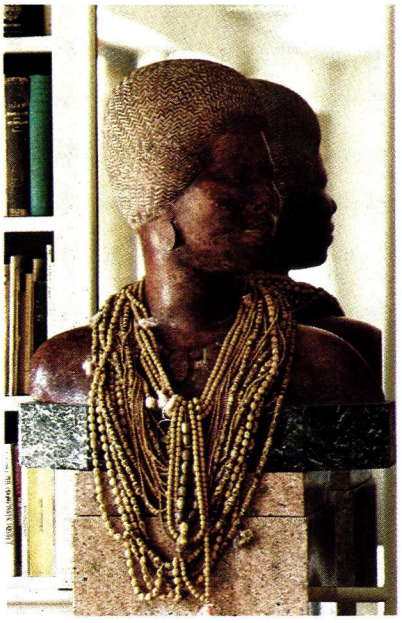
Dick Dumas is a ''maniac'' about houses. If he could, he would have five hundred of them: ''I'm sort of a doctor of houses. I love them, and when they're in pain and need to be fixed, I feel it's my duty to fix them.''

A twelve-point stag's head found in Philadelphia is superimposed on one of the brass mirrors that surround the library, right. The round table is for working and for meals. There is no fixed dining room—Dumas believes in eating wherever you like. Above: Dick Dumas leans on a plaster horse's head on his terrace—''the view looks like the background of the Mona Lisa,'' he says.

FRANÇOIS HALARD

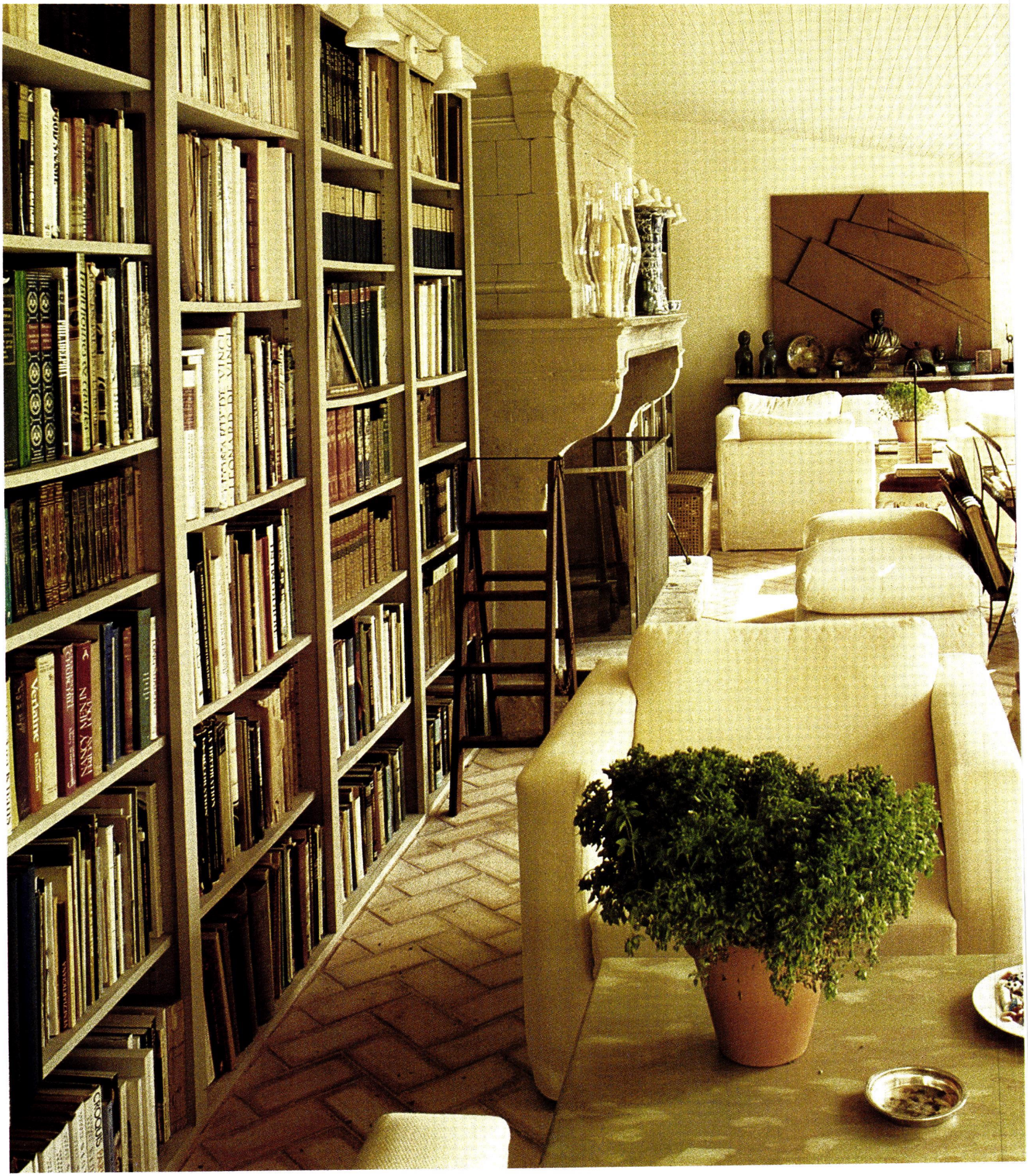


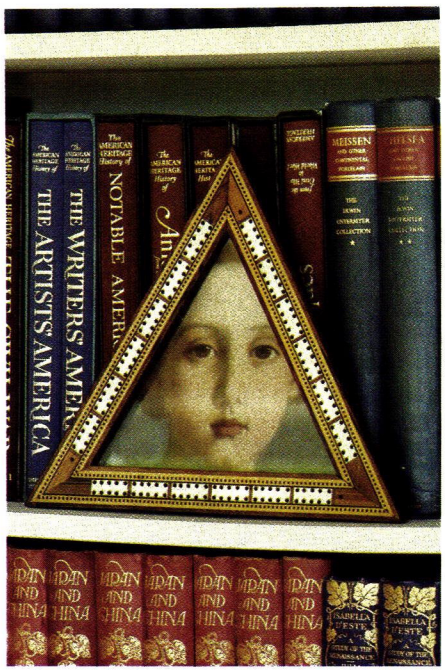
Provençal stripped of the provincial clichés. Clockwise from top left: Dumas's bathroom features an early automobile jump seat, with his shoes on the steps leading to the bedroom. A reflecting globe sits on a wooden pedestal. In the guest room, breakfast is served at a Louis XV leather chair with a portrait of Napoleon on a petit-point pillow. Wooden birds perch in an old wood-and-wire cage. Back view focuses on one of Dumas's own button-on slipcovers. On the terrace a Souleiado paisley cloth from Pierre Deux covers a Dumas-designed table, with a built-in white sofa surrounding the loggia. Fragrant cedar beads encircle a 1930s marble bust made for the "Colonial Exhibition" in Paris. A 19th-century artist's articulated iron mannequin poses on the terrace wall. Details see Sources.



FRANÇOIS HALARD

Twelfth-century stone houses in Oppède-le-Vieux, seen from Dumas's terrace.


Verlaine
NANCY MITFORD
CHRISTOPHER HILL



His greasy spoon, the Café Gite, had been for sale for two and a half years and was in serious need of surgery. "It was Ye Olde Provence with a capital Ye Olde. I'm very much against Ye Olde. If it's old, fine. But I don't want a copy of an old. So I took all the neo-Provence out of it." Dumas cleaned it up and stripped it of all its provincial clichés. He lightened it by using a lot of beige paint, especially on the putty-brown ceiling beams, and knocked down walls to open the space. He made the terrace into a big outdoor drawing room.

Dumas used to be a fashion designer—he began with the famous couturier Charles James and later designed junior clothes on Seventh Avenue under his own label—and his approach to decorating sometimes reflects that. All the sofas and French chairs in his house are wearing slipcovers that button on, with their lower buttons undone in back. "You know, the way a man doesn't button the last two buttons of his waistcoat, or a woman doesn't button the last three buttons of her skirt. I thought that's the way slipcovers should look." This isn't the first time buttons have figured in Dumas's designs. It happened when he moved to Paris from New York in the early sixties and started what became

In the long drawing room, left, upholstered furniture designed by Dumas surrounds a 17th-century fireplace. A huge bronze sculpture by local artist Nicky Nicolina is on the far wall. Above: A 19th-century ivory-and-mahogany English cribbage board frames a portrait of a child.

FRANÇOIS HALARD

an enormously successful shop called Fourteen on the rue de l'Université. "It specialized in decoration and antiquities and amusing junk—whatever could be used by people who live a good life."

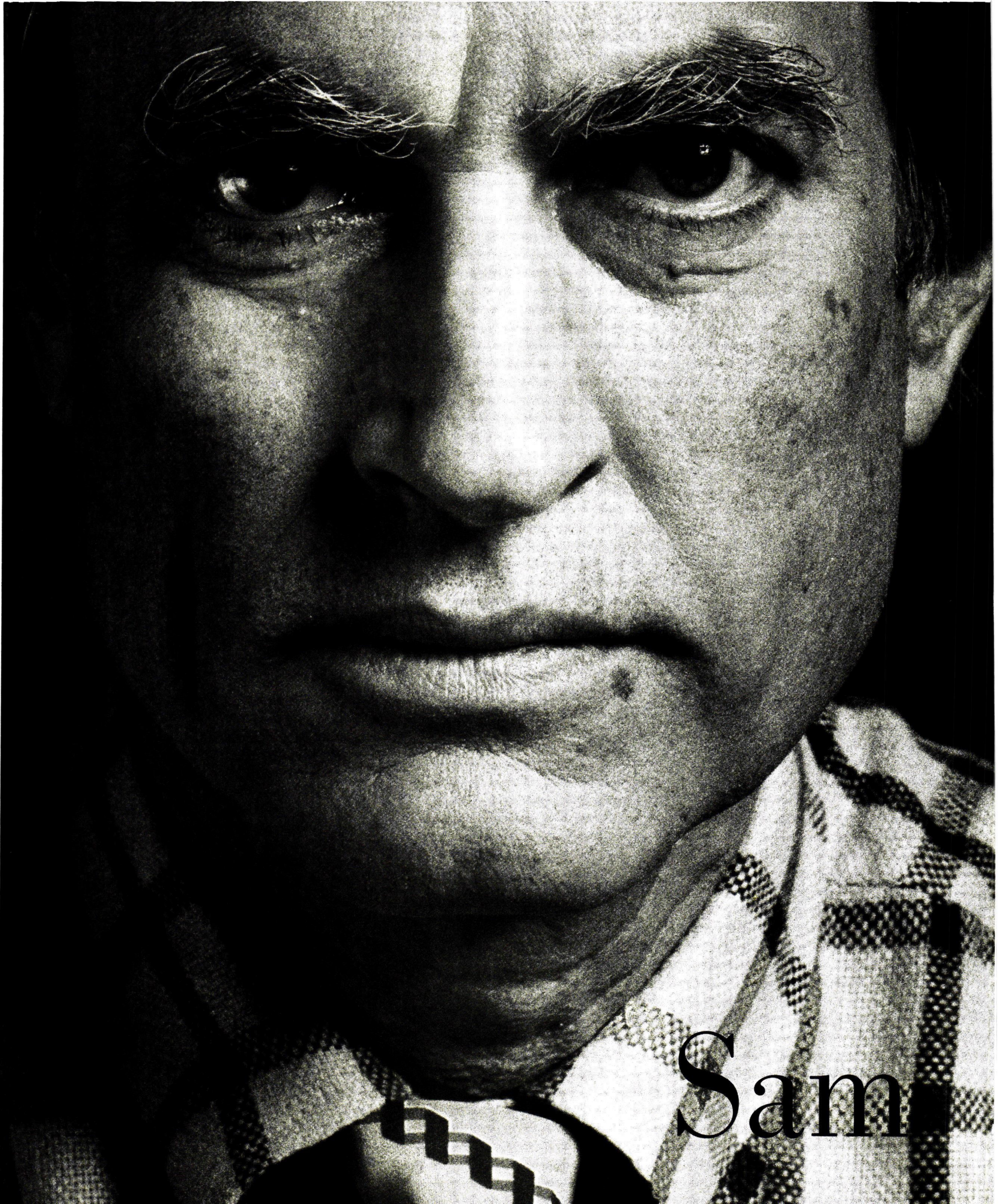
He bought from a taxidermist about three hundred glass eyes of "owls, tigers, and God knows what" and made them into buttons for women's suits, cuff links for men, buckles for shoes, and clasps for handbags. When people saw his shop with its white leather walls and white floors and spotlights, some of them asked him to decorate their flats. "I had no training in decorating," he says. "With design, you've either got it or you don't. I could design tin cans—anything. Anything."

Dumas believes he is related to Alexandre Dumas, but he isn't certain; his grandmother was embarrassed by the rumor of the novelist-dramatist's illegitimate birth and did everything she could to squelch the connection. "It's either Alexandre Dumas *(Text continued on page 149)*

Dumas's bedroom, top, once the attic, looks out to the castle in ruins. A faience cat by Gallé and a collection of World War I miniature silk hats sit on a Louis XVI bureau plat. Above: In the guest room Souleiado chintz frames four-poster beds Dumas made with plumbing pipes painted in faux tiger. The floors are natural oak rubbed with white paint.

FRANÇOIS HALARD

Dumas painted the terrace trees with white lime—an 18th-century remedy to ward off bugs—because it reminds him of the tropics. The floor is made of bricks placed on a bias to lead the eye to the view. The windows are curtained on the outside in billowing white cotton to keep the sun off the house.


Sam

Four Gorham seafood servers, with mussel shell bowls lashed onto bamboo handles, are supreme examples of the 1870s craze for naturalism. Opposite: Sam Wagstaff in 1979.

Wagstaff's Silver

BY INGRID SISCHY

PHOTOGRAPHED BY ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE

Sam Wagstaff looked and acted as though he was born with a silver spoon in his mouth. It always seemed to me that he was the handsomest man in the world. And it always seemed as though he could have been anything and done anything he wanted. He could have, and he did. He was known first as a dynamic curator of modern and contemporary art—working at the Wadsworth Atheneum and the Detroit Institute of Arts—and then as a collector. He was really a collector all his life, but he went at it full time in his last twenty years. This is where his genius came out.

Still, people were surprised when he started to focus on American silver in 1984. We're talking about someone who ate out, opened a can, or ordered takeout, so the very idea of silver pieces cluttering the shelves seemed out of character, too fussy and retro for a man who traveled so light. That's why collecting photography, the modern medium of light, had matched his image so well. But here, too, when he first started buying pictures and talking about photography as more magnetic for our time than painting and sculpture, he didn't find unanimous agreement in either art or collecting circles. In fact, in the early 1970s, there were very few people having serious love affairs with what a person with a camera could achieve. Yet by 1984, when Wagstaff sold his collection of nineteenth- and twentieth-century photography to the Getty Museum, he had more than proved his argument, so much so that you could hear something virtually blasphemous in the chauvinistic New York art world—an admission of envy that the most important private collection of photographs was on its way to California.

With American Victorian silver Wagstaff's prescience becomes evident again. And again, when he first entered the field, only he and a few others wanted the stuff. Most connoisseurs disdained its eccentric designs, its democratic use of mixed metals, its embracing of sources as diverse as Alaska, ancient Greece, and the East; they preferred something more European, less wild. Wagstaff and those few others comprised a tiny world where everyone knew everyone else and agreed that everyone outside that world was dead wrong. That was part of the fun for Wagstaff—the intimate underground aspect of collecting, the renegade angle that challenged the ruling orders of taste. Wagstaff's air of entitlement came in especially handy. *(Text continued on page 148)*

"This is a collection sifted through my eccentricity"
—Sam Wagstaff

Fed up with the stodginess of French Classicism, Victorians ventured east. The star of Wagstaff's collection is an 1881 Gorham compote, above, supported by costumed elephants and draped with a Persian blanket exquisitely detailed down to its silver-gilt fringe.
Opposite: An Eskimo's reindeer-driven sled leaps across frozen terrain on a Gorham centerpiece, c. 1870, made for serving ice cream.

ROMAN REVIVAL

A bust of Juno, goddess of women, at right, gazes down on the Roman apartment of designer Adriano Magistretti. The gilded-wood and bronze sun-shaped chandelier sheds light on a green faux marble dining table set with English Regency candlesticks. A pair of terra-cotta garden seats, c. 1900, mimic an ancient Roman design. Ornamental mahogany scallop shells, c. 1800, flank the Turkish sofa by Magistretti's own Pediment Design. Details see Sources.

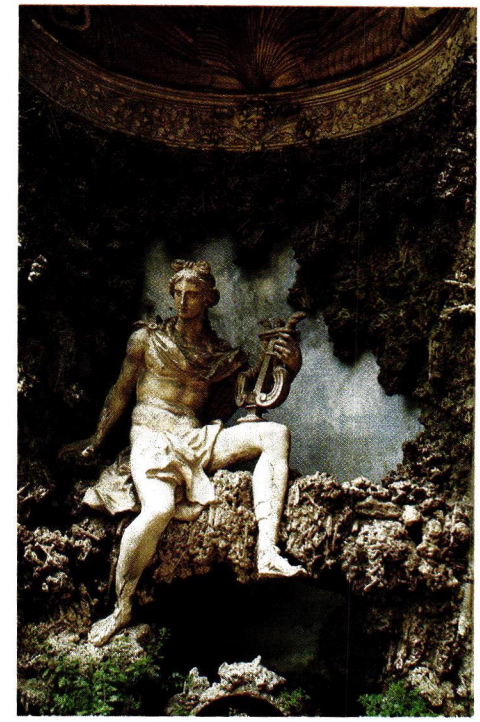
FRANÇOIS HALARD

Adriano Magistretti transformed a sixteenth-century orangery into a one-room palazzo. By Jonathan Turner

Produced by Marie-Paule Pellé

Juno gazes down from her pedestal. Behind her the warm Roman sunlight streams in through an arched window as footsteps echo on the cobbled streets outside. As she surveys her territory, Juno poses in dramatic silhouette. This morning the studio apartment of interior designer Adriano Magistretti, with its vaulted ceiling and sparse, precise furniture, is pretending to be a stage set.

Magistretti's apartment on the ground floor of a late sixteenth century palazzo in the heart of ancient Rome has led a theatrical life. Originally it was simply an arcade in the courtyard of a palace built in the district of the Eternal City favored by Florentine cardinals. Opening onto the gardens, it was used as an orangery where musical and theatrical performances were most likely staged. Later the arches were bricked up, and the space was turned into a stable. The horses and carriages eventually disappeared, and when Magistretti rediscovered the enclosed arcade in 1983, it was little more than a dilapidated basement with a sloping sandy floor.



A vaulted niche, above, part of a 17th-century Roman fountain behind the apartment, houses Apollo resting in a grotto. Left: Adriano Magistretti overlooks the palazzo courtyard from a stone alcove outside his apartment.

"Because we are sitting on the same level as the River Tiber, this area is rather damp," says Magistretti in measured tones. "So I raised the floor to let the air circulate. Then I repaired the existing pillars and painted them in Florentine gray. It was all a question of putting back. Now, at certain times of the day, the apartment comes into its own magic. In the evening I play with the electric-light switches, but during the morning, sun and clouds cast their own spells."

Adriano Magistretti designs his conversation as cautiously as he designs his interiors. He weighs the accuracy of every phrase he uses, as though he could be sentenced in a court of grammatical law for hasty expression. Similarly, his choice of furniture is restricted to a formal vocabulary of refined objects. His apart-

ment, like his sense of decorating, is calmly mesmerizing and an affront to indecency.

The statue of Juno is not the only figure scrutinizing Magistretti's domain. Against the far wall, flanking a faded circular fresco of a forgotten woman visiting a cardinal, a married couple, captured in oils by Gaetano Piattoli in about 1750, focuses their sharp eyes on the visitor. Some of the furniture may be transient, but Magistretti feels that these painted characters are intrinsic to his apartment. The maiden name of Magistretti's mother was Piattoli, and her ancestors were the founders of the Academy of Florence. The pair of canvases portrays the straight-backed union between Anna Maria, last of the Medici, and William, the elector palatine. As such, they contribute to the anachronism of a converted Florentine stable in the center of Rome. Between the arches hang oval medallions with profiles of half a dozen Medici, and the fleur de lis, emblem of the original palazzo, is painted as a frieze onto the column capitals as an additional Florentine touch.

Thomas Corey, with whom Magistretti established Pediment Design in New York five years ago, sits on a Turkish-inspired sofa and looks in the same direction as Piattoli's double portrait. The opposite wall features a bookcase with a gilt-ridden eagle perched on top and a sky-blue fresco painted with stars in what Magistretti refers to as the Giotto pattern. Next to volumes of Nubian architecture and Egyptian interiors, the shelves display titles invented by friends. The bookcase, though, conceals *(Text continued on page 149)*

A 1934 cast-iron lamp, left, by Alberto Gherardi stands between a cherry-wood Austrian Biedermeier chair, c. 1815, and a 17th-century stucco and papier-mâché medallion of Lorenzo de' Medici. Above and overleaf: A sky-blue fresco dotted with stars arches above a wall of faux Biedermeier bookcases. The outer pair conceals doors leading to the kitchen and bath. The fresco rests between pillars decorated with golden fleurs de lis, the palazzo's emblem. Hand-carved pinecones adorn the bookcases; the nearer cones are larger, creating a trompe l'oeil effect.

FRANÇOIS HALARD

High-keyed yellow satin from Scalamandré sets off a purple mantel. Louis XV chinoiserie clock from Bernard Steinitz & Fils, Sheffield beaker from Joel Mathieson. Left: Fire blower and Louis XVI andirons from William Jackson. All mantels painted by Sara Nesbitt. Details see Sources.

MICHAEL MUNDY

PLAYING WITH FIRE

A coat of paint, a bolt of fabric, a few well-chosen objects spruce up the humble hearth. HG takes on the mantel

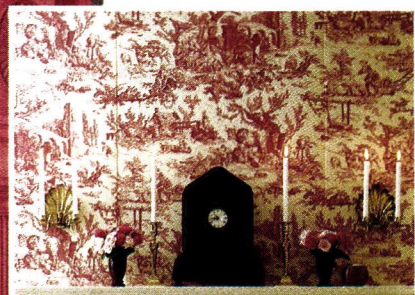
The Quadrille stripe, left, aligns the G. Flamant 1928 bronze head and Malevich teapot from Primavera, Anasazi pot from Wallengren Gallery, c. 1910 plate from Garvin Mecking, lamp from D. F. Sanders, portrait by Herb Ritts, glass bowl from James II Galleries. Above: English finials and French garden ornaments from Garvin Mecking. Top: Giacometti andirons from A. Smith.

MICHAEL MUNDY

Tartan fabric, right, in a new palette from Christopher Hyland highlights a group of 19th-century objects. Racehorse paintings and marquetry mirror from John Rosselli, carpet balls and model Gothic castle from Garvin Mecking, Georgian mahogany candlesticks from James II, brass fender and screwdriver-cum-poker from Stair & Co., George III bucket from Florian Papp. Above: Hessian soldier andirons from William Jackson. Mantels from Readybuilt Products.

MICHAEL MUNDY

A red mantel, left, balances Regency candelabra from James II, 18th-century family portrait from Vito Giallo, and George III silver cups from J. Mavec that echo the Clarence House chintz. Tools from William Jackson, andirons from Stair & Co. Below: The mantel picks up motifs from Brunschwig toile. New England fireboard, c. 1890, from Garvin Mecking, Tramp Art clock from Limited Editions, brass shell sconces and candlesticks from James II, English rail-style brass fender from Danny Alessandro, fire tools and andirons from William Jackson, basket of wheat from Pierre Deux.



Styled by Jacques Dehornois
Editors: Carolyn Sollis and Sarah Kaltman

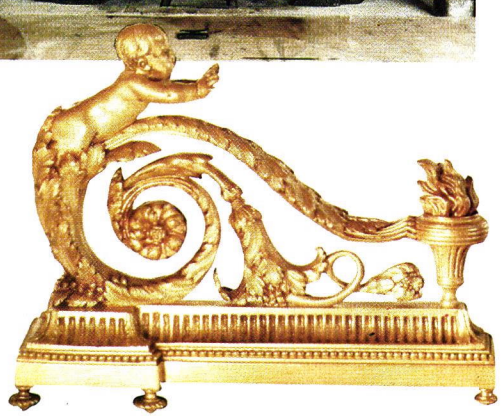
Straight from the Hearth

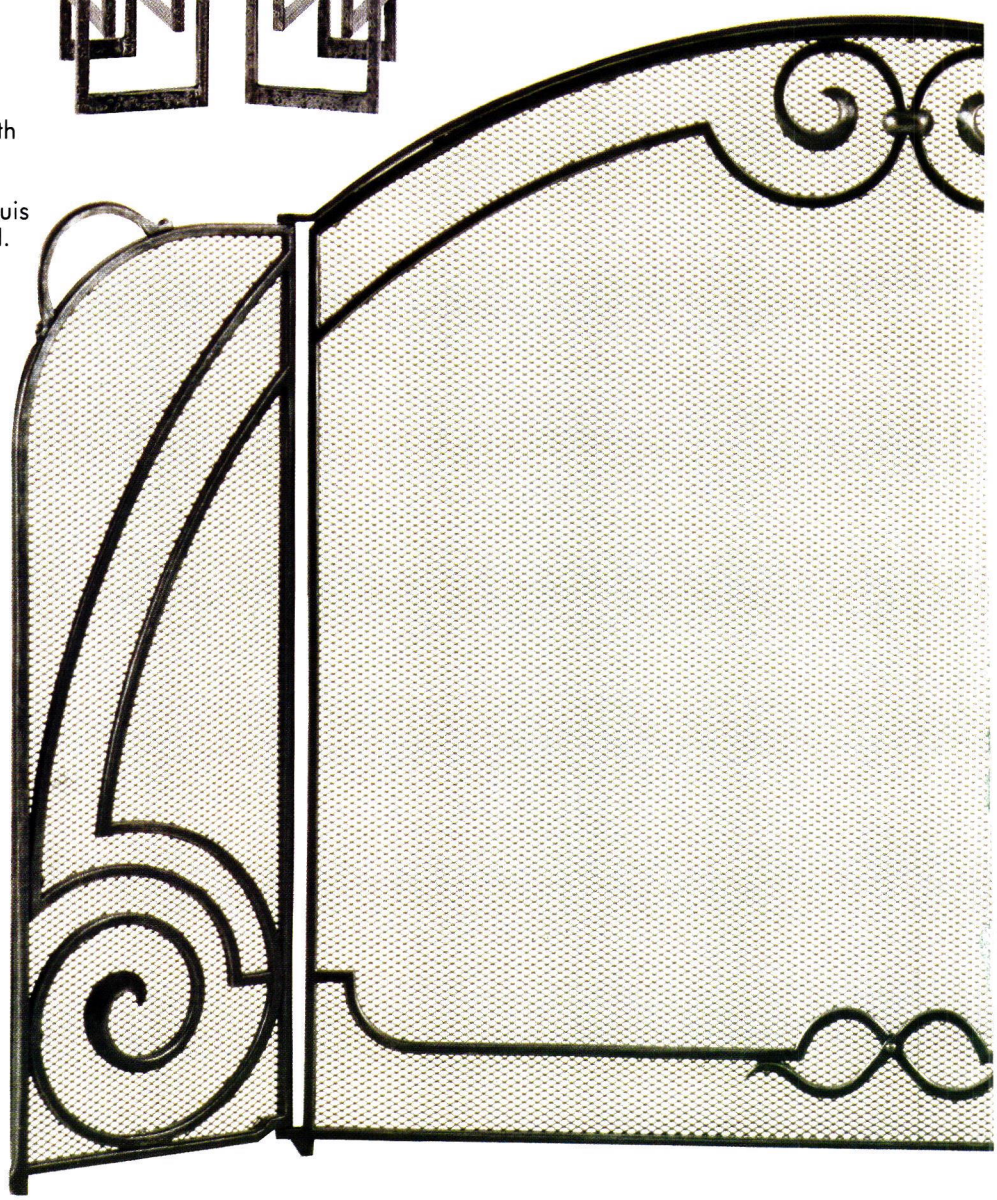
What's hot in fireplace equipment

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: MICHAEL MUNDY (4); MARSHALL NOICE; GARY BOGUE

Sparks are flying out of forges nationwide thanks to a new generation of blacksmiths who have been adding their own imprint to the ancient craft. Using traditional methods of heating and hammering metal, these artisans have come out with a surprising array of fire tools that range in look from early American to whimsically modern and sculptural. Here, HG gathers the most striking new designs in wrought iron and some timeless classics as well. For a list of working blacksmiths and dealers that carry fireplace tools see Sources. ▲

Top right: A 19th-century English fender, $9,500, and a Victorian screwdriver-turned-poker, $450, both from Stair & Co., with a George III bucket, $4,950, from Florian Papp. Right: Matthew Smyth andirons, $660, from Luten Clarey Stern. Bottom right: Firescreen by Jerry Hoffman, $1,400. Bottom: Louis XVI andirons, $3,400, at William H. Jackson. Below: Bear andirons by Jeffrey Funk, $2,500. Left: Ivan Bailey tongs, $1,000.





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MENTHOL: 11 mg. "tar", 0.8 mg. nicotine, av. per cigarette by FTC method.

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RITZ

A celebration of style and taste by

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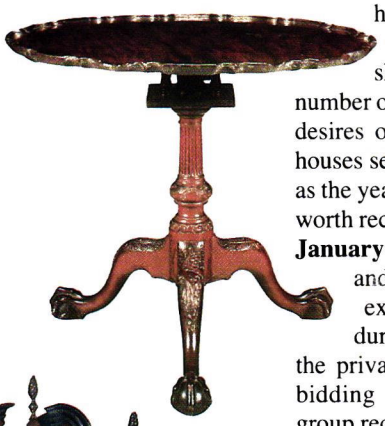
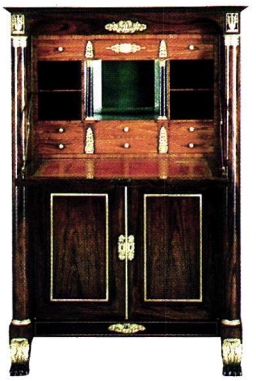
Old Glories

Sam Pennington predicts high-stakes American furniture may be the bargain of the year

Americana's hall of fame. Left: The $2.75 million Cadwalader wing chair, the most expensive piece of furniture ever sold at auction. Below left: Detail from a $594,000 Charles Honoré Lannuier pier table. Below: The $1.045 million piecrust tea table, the first piece to break the million-dollar mark. Right: A rare Philadelphia Neoclassical secretary, c. 1815, that sold for $302,500 in January 1987.





Boston chest-on-chest, estimated to bring $70,000–$100,000 at Christie's on January 21.

Americana takes center stage in January. At New York's prestigious Winter Antiques Show, mobs gather to ogle the legs on curvaceous Queen Anne chairs and admire six-figure highboys. Clustered around the show are a series of less regal antiques fairs where the pickings are more attainable. But many buyers hold out to see what the New York auction houses have to offer since late January is when Christie's and Sotheby's trot out their best pieces. New England auctioneers, too, have gotten the message. They now save some blockbusters for their winter sales.

Three years ago, after thirty years of a steady bull market, prices for the best American antique furniture began rocketing to unheard of levels. The cost of middle-range things—late eighteenth century flattop highboys, maple tall chests, and country slant-front desks—soared upward as well, and for a time it looked as if only the very rich would ever be able to afford early American furniture. But in recent months prices at the top have started to seem erratic. This January some of these very same high-end examples of American craftsmanship could be bargains. Of course, it all depends on a number of crucial, but hard to predict, factors: the economy, the desires of top collectors, and, most of all, what the auction houses serve up. To understand why 1989 may be remembered as the year of opportunity for American furniture collectors, it's worth recalling some scenarios from the past.

January 25, 1986. New Hampshire collector Eddy Nicholson and Dean Failey, Christie's American furniture expert, excuse themselves from a luncheon Nicholson is hosting during the break from Christie's Americana auction. In the privacy of the men's room Nicholson gives Failey some bidding instructions that are to rock the market. When the group reconvenes at Christie's, a superb Philadelphia Chippendale tilt-top piecrust tea table comes on the block. It is estimated to bring $350,000–$500,000. Normally the auctioneer asks for a bid below the low estimate and moves the price up in increments of $25,000. This time he opens the bidding at $550,000, and the usually blasé group of auctiongoers lets out a gasp. All eyes focus on Harold Sack, dean of American furniture dealers, whose firm sold this same table for $15,000 in 1953. Sack doesn't budge, and the auctioneer starts to wield his hammer when a phone bidder offers $575,000. Then, with the flick of his gold pencil, Sack enters the bidding and stays in it to $925,000. The table goes to Nicholson. With the ten percent

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY SOTHEBY'S (2); COURTESY CHRISTIE'S (2); COURTESY SOTHEBY'S

buyer's premium, the total price comes to $1,045,000. In the auction world the event is akin to beating the four-minute mile. The million-dollar barrier has been broken.

January 31, 1987. A 1775 wing chair discovered in a Pennsylvania garage appears at Sotheby's. Made in the highest Philadelphia Chippendale style for the revolutionary war general John Cadwalader, the chair's chief attraction is its spectacularly carved hairy-paw feet. Sotheby's tags it with a $700,000–$900,000 estimate and removes its slipcover to show off a masterful frame stripped of upholstery and riddled with nail holes. Leading collectors in the field, including comedian Bill Cosby, show up. To everyone's surprise a wild-card bidder, young New York dealer Leigh Keno, enters the competition and walks away with the chair for $2.75 million, a world record for any piece of furniture. (Trade sources insist Keno was bidding on behalf of Richard Dietrich, a very private Pennsylvania collector whose foundation lends Americana to museums.)

May 28, 1987. Word on the Cadwalader sale travels, and anyone who owns an old easy chair starts to think it's worth a fortune. Sellers assume American furniture will continue on a straight path to the stars, but there are signs that the $2.75 million may be the apogee of the price boom, the last star burst. Christie's offers a rare matching highboy, lowboy, and two chairs from a Philadelphia family. Before the sale the Sacks say they're prepared to go up to $4 million for the set. With a few fast bids it's theirs for $1.76 million. A shell-carved Newport secretary bearing a $1.4 million reserve fails to provoke a single bid and gets returned to a very unhappy consignor. People blame everything from the ups and downs of the stock market to overly ambitious auction houses. Whatever the causes, the outlook seems bad for sellers but good for buyers.

January 30, 1988. Sotheby's American furniture sale is a disaster with piece after piece failing to attract the minimum acceptable bids set by the consignors. Forty-two percent of an important collection goes unsold. Christie's fares little better.

June 4, 1988. Hoping to stir up the competition again, Christie's offers another great Philadelphia wing chair, putting a conservative $400,000–$600,000 estimate on it. Only one collector is interested. The chair sells on a single bid for $440,000. Failey, who expected the piece to bring at least $1 million, tells the press the buyer "pulled off the coup of a lifetime."

Some sober truths have emerged about the auction market at the top. Only a few million-dollar pieces of furniture exist, and there are just as few buyers who can afford them. Fine condition and provenance are crucial and can mean the difference between a record-breaker and a run-of-the-mill price. With so much at stake these days, buyers are warier than ever of paying top dollar for damaged goods. Of course, if a real masterpiece surfaces, the competition could get fierce again. At Christie's October 1988 sale a rare early eighteenth century kneehole desk painted with the chinoiserie decoration called japanning was estimated at only $6,000–$8,000. When Christie's put it on exhibit, however, the desk—once used as a sewing-machine stand in a New York apartment—was recognized as the first major piece of japanned furniture to come to market since 1975. Collector Eddy Nicholson was three hundred miles out in the African bush on safari when his advisers cabled to say the piece should be in his collection. He arrived at the Mount Kenya Safari Club (founded by the late William Holden) just in time to call in a whopping bid to Christie's. The desk was his for $240,000.

It's also possible that a collector could come out of left field with an open checkbook. Last June at a Richard Oliver auction under a tent in Kennebunk, Maine, shopping-center developer and manuscript collector Emile Dumont paid $440,000 for a Simon Willard tall-case clock. Dumont said he bought the clock for its historical importance, believing it had been a witness to the Boston Tea Party.

Dumont's purchase illustrates the flag factor. American furniture is not yet an international market like Impressionist paintings. Some say it's not going anywhere until the Japanese develop a taste for the ball-and-claw foot, an idea that's not so farfetched since the motif has an Oriental origin—the dragon's claw clutching the pearl of wisdom. So far there's been little need for translators in American auction rooms. But as one auctioneer says, "The nice thing about this business is that you never know who's going to walk in the front door or whether they'll want to pay in dollars or yen."

January Sales

Christie's
502 Park Ave., New York, NY 10022
(212) 546-1000
January 11: Old-master paintings
January 20: American prints
January 21: American furniture and decoration

William Doyle Galleries
175 East 87 St., New York, NY 10128
(212) 427-2730
January 11: Belle Époque
January 25: English and Continental furniture and decorations

Guernsey's
136 East 73 St., New York, NY 10021
(212) 794-2280
January 21: Maxwell's Plum restaurant furnishings and decorations (held on premises)

Sotheby's
1334 York Ave., New York, NY 10021
(212) 606-7000
January 12: Old-master paintings
January 13: Old-master drawings
January 21: English furniture
January 25: Chinese export porcelain
January 26: Prints
January 27–28: American furniture, silver, and folk art

Butterfield & Butterfield
220 San Bruno Ave., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 861-7500
January 10: Furniture and decorative arts
January 11: Oriental art, Victorian paintings
January 12: Oriental rugs and carpets

Butterfield & Butterfield
7601 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90046
(213) 850-7500
January 24–25: Contents from estate of antiques dealer Don Badertscher
January 24–25: Walter Winchell memorabilia

Skinner
Rte. 117, Bolton, MA 01740
(508) 779-6241
January 14: Americana
January 27: Art glass

Richard Oliver
Rte. 1, Plaza 1, Kennebunk, ME 04043
(207) 985-3600
January 8: Americana

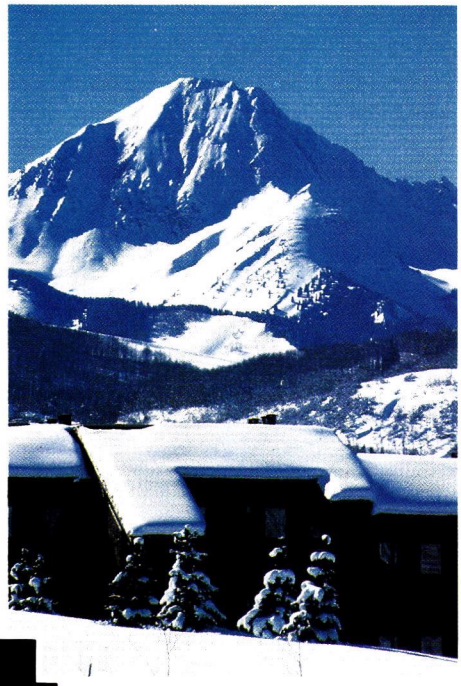
Richard Withington
RD 2, Box 440, Hillsboro, NH 03244
(603) 464-3232
January 7: American furniture

ANTIQUES SHOWS

Art at the Armory
68 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10010
(212) 777-5218
January 19–22

Winter Antiques Show
7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 67 St.
New York, NY 10021; (212) 665-5250
January 20–29

Historical Annapolis Antiques Show
Medford National Guard Armory, Hudson St. (off West St.), Annapolis, MD 21401
(301) 224-9735
January 27–29



White Sales

With slopeside condos at an all-time low, skiers are racing to invest in a piece of the rock

There isn't a skier alive who hasn't fantasized about owning a slopeside vacation house. Those enamored of the sport and the singular allure of Western ski towns dream about blazing fireplaces and high-beamed ceilings, down comforters, a huge Jacuzzi, enough room for friends, all within walking, or better yet, skiing distance of the lifts.

In the late 1970s and early '80s that was an attainable dream—one that even came with built-in tax advantages. In those heady days, property values were soaring and hammers were pounding in resorts like Keystone, Colorado, and Sun Valley, Idaho. But the hammers started to go quiet in 1982, when the people who fueled the booms in these Western ski towns—oil-rich Texans and wealthy Mexicans—suddenly saw their economies crumbling and abruptly stopped investing.

At about the same time, a 1986 tax change was in the wind which would dramatically curtail rental-expense deductions allowed on second homes, and the condominium market ground to a halt. People were still skiing—and loving it—but they were staying in hotel rooms or renting their pick of hundreds of newly affordable unsold units. The unlucky were stuck holding real estate that was dropping in value at a terrifying rate.

The good news is that today the worst seems to be over, and the skier who still longs for that chalet in the pines can discover tremendous values. This is particularly true in the areas hit hardest by the slump—those that cater more to middle-income skiers—where prices are as much as fifty percent lower than they were at their height.

In the tonier resorts, such as Aspen/Snowmass and Vail/Beaver Creek where million-dollar properties are common, buyers are returning in droves to snatch up luxury condominiums and town houses, often at reduced rates. Even more significantly, a new breed of buyer is emerging—a buyer who doesn't have any intention of giving up his second house to renters for most of the year, a buyer who actually plans to *use* the place.

COLORADO

For skiers who like a fast-paced cosmopolitan vacation, few areas have the glittery appeal of Aspen. The skiing is superb, with Ajax, Buttermilk, Snowmass, and Aspen Highlands all within minutes of one another. And after the lifts close, Aspen is pure fun. There is big money in and around Aspen (after all, neighbors include Jack Nicholson, Danny Sullivan, and Goldie Hawn), and, predictably, the real estate is pricey.

Although the market had slowed considerably by the mid eighties, now affluent buyers of big-ticket properties are back. In the restored Victorian mining town of Aspen unimproved land is so scarce that lots with nondescript houses are being purchased just for the acreage. Developers are also building two-, four-, and six-unit town houses in downtown Aspen (the first since the late seventies) and putting them on the market for $750,000–$1.4 million. Close to forty of these are under construction or will be within the year, and a number have been presold.

Ten miles up the road, in Snowmass, buyers who are willing to sacrifice the Aspen address or who are looking for a mellower environment are getting more for their money. Most properties in this community have ski in–ski out access and dramatic views. The same property that sells for $600,000 in Aspen would be listed at about $400,000 in Snowmass, according to B. J. Adams of Snowmass Real Estate in Snowmass Village. Best buys in both areas are to be found in less luxurious 1,000-square-foot two-bedroom condominiums built prior to 1975, now selling for $150,000–$250,000—down in some cases by $100,000.

In Summit County, an hour and a half from Denver, the buyer is very much in control. The area real estate—which includes the ski resorts of Copper Mountain, Keystone, Breckenridge, and Arapaho Basin—is priced lower than it has been in eight years, according to Tom Massaro of RE/MAX Properties of the Summit in Frisco.

The primary market in Summit County for condominiums is in the $80,000–$100,000 range for a two-bedroom, two-bath unit with a pool and health club facilities. More luxurious properties are greatly reduced as well: for example, a deluxe slopeside unit in Keystone which sold for $400,000 when new is now selling for $250,000.

If you don't care about being at the base of one of the ski mountains, there are some bargain-basement opportunities a short drive away in the town of Frisco on the shores of Lake Dillon where a new marina is in the works and an eighteen-hole golf course has been proposed.

A view of Snowmass Village near Aspen, above, which has 55 miles of ski trails. Below: In the village, Woodrun Place has 55 condominiums for rent.

TOP: ASPEN SKIING COMPANY / BOB KRUEGER; BOTTOM: COURTESY SNOWMASS REAL ESTATE

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UTAH

People come from all over the world to sample Utah's famous fluffy, deep powder snow. The top resorts, ranging from the no-frills challenge of Alta to the superposh ease of Deer Valley, are all an hour or so from the Salt Lake City airport, making this area particularly attractive to out-of-town investors.

Park City, a good-looking former mining town, has condominiums whose prices, which averaged $182,000 in 1985, have fallen every year since to the present average of $94,000. Gump & Ayers Real Estate broker Rick Widdows thinks the market has bottomed out and is now on the upswing again. "But no one expects to see the price appreciation we had in the early eighties. The boom-bust days are over," he says. "It's a much healthier situation." And a much more affordable one.

Sales are particularly strong in Park City for condominiums under $100,000, according to Widdows. For that price, the buyer might find a two- or three-bedroom, 1,400-square-foot unit on one of the local golf courses or within minutes of the ski resort.

Up the road, the upscale Deer Valley ski area has also taken its share of big hits, despite being marketed to affluent clientele. According to Bob Wells of Deer Valley Resort, property values have come down seventeen percent from peak, and inventory on resale units is about double what it should be.

The shift in the market has created a trend toward smaller units in the Deer Valley area. Over the years a standard two-bedroom condominium had expanded to 2,000–2,500 square feet. Now 1,000–1,200-square-foot units are being planned (the first in three years) which will be more attractive to buyers burned by the new tax law.

If present owners consent, eleven more units may be added to the exclusive full-service Stein Eriksen Lodge 54-unit slopeside condominiums, which sell for about $500,000–$700,000 and command rental rates of $1,000 a night—a further sign that the market is reviving.

The Snowbird/Alta area in Little Cottonwood Canyon has been able to remain relatively strong through the lean years, thanks largely to the limited availability of property—95 percent of the area is owned by the forest service, and the five percent that is not has been almost entirely developed. There are over two hundred condominiums in the canyon and only that many more will ever be built, according to Alex Miller of Snowbird Realty. Such limited supply has kept demand and prices high and meant buyers could count on paying about $110,000 per bedroom for condominium units.

IDAHO

Sun Valley has always been associated with romantic, larger-than-life figures like Ernest Hemingway, Gary Cooper, and Averell Harriman. But in recent years when hard times hit this grande dame of ski resorts, the place seemed to be in danger of losing its vitality. Happily, though, after three years of "nothing going on," real estate sales are up, and Sun Valley is thriving again, according to Phil Conger of Sun Valley Realty.

The dramatic turnaround has been spurred by what Conger thinks is the buyers' realization that condominium prices, down 20–25 percent from their peak, are as low as they are going to go. Properties are "moving at bargain-basement prices," says Conger. No new condominiums have been built in the area in five years, rental housing is increasingly difficult to find, and the detached single-family luxury house "has priced itself out of the market." These factors, along with a generally stronger economy, have resuscitated the condominium market in Sun Valley.

Prices for a three-bedroom 1,600–1,700-square-foot unit in Sun Valley are averaging about $145,000–$185,000, with two-bedroom units selling for $65,000–$70,000. The condo market isn't the only thing that's heating up in Sun Valley: huge single-family houses are being bought by stars like Clint Eastwood and Brooke Shields—and helping to keep Sun Valley's glamorous image alive and well.

Meg Lukens

Ski Condominiums

COLORADO

From RE/MAX Properties of the Summit, Frisco (303) 668-5300

Lagoon $169,900

This 2,000-square-foot condominium unit—with three levels, four decks, three bedrooms, two full baths, two half baths, and a Jacuzzi room—has unobstructed views of Lake Dillon and of a proposed golf course. It is minutes from all four major Summit County ski resorts.

Mountain Side $81,900

This furnished unit, in a strong rental complex, is next to the forty-mile bike trail that runs from Breckenridge to Vail. Deluxe one-bedroom loft, one bath.

From Snowmass Real Estate, Snowmass Village (303) 923-2006

Deerbrook Townhomes $1,100,000–$1,450,000

Fifteen new slopeside 3,000-square-foot units with ski in/ski out access, have three bedrooms, Jacuzzis, and garages. Within walking distance of shops and restaurants.

From Kelly Properties, Aspen (303) 925-4971

Spring Street Townhomes $975,000

Two new 2,400-square-foot town houses have three bedrooms, three and a half baths. Located in the heart of Aspen.

Aspen Square $259,000

This two-bedroom, two-bath unit is in a complex directly across the street from the new gondola and within walking distance of shops and restaurants.

UTAH

From Gump & Ayers Real Estate, Park City (801) 649-8550

The Ridge $275,000–$325,000

Seven new luxury mountainside 2,100-square-foot units. A short walk from ski lifts, they have three bedrooms, three and a half baths, attached garages, hot tubs, and views.

Racquet Club $79,000–$92,000

Several resale units of two or three bedrooms on the Park Meadows golf course. Two miles from the ski lifts, they offer direct access to cross-country skiing in winter.

From Snowbird Realty, Snowbird (800) 453-7122

Sugarplum Phase I $550,000

This furnished three-bedroom unit in a six-unit property has 3,000 square feet, three bedrooms, three and a half baths, atrium ceilings, hot tub, garage. Ski access to Snowbird.

The Village at Sugarplum $245,000–$265,000

Four two-bedroom 1,600-square-foot units in a classic ski-lodge complex have garages, two and a half baths, and direct ski access to Snowbird.

The Lodge at Snowbird $250,000

This 1,000-square-foot furnished unit has one bedroom, two baths, fireplaces, use of common pool and Jacuzzi. Located at the base of Snowbird, it is within walking distance of restaurants and shops.

IDAHO

From Sun Valley Realty, Sun Valley (208) 622-3392

The Villager $92,500

Located in Sun Valley, within walking distance of shops and restaurants, these 1,000-square-foot furnished units have two bedrooms, garages, views of the mountains.

Prospector $155,000

These 1,100-square-foot units have two bedrooms, two and a half baths, and are within walking distance of Bald Mountain lifts, a few miles outside Sun Valley.

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Sam Wagstaff's Silver

(Continued from page 110) Arrogance served—such a smooth way to get beyond the rules of the game. He didn't even have to attack orthodoxies he didn't respect; he simply appeared above it all. You could say he was a bohemian in patrician's clothing—a combination that guaranteed surprises.

Such as the time silver spoons were coming out of his pocket. A few of his friends were at the restaurant Da Silvano, seated and waiting for him. When he showed, he had that swallowed-a-canary look he could get. Even before sitting down, so it wasn't the slightest bit subtle, he pushed away the existing flatware from each of our settings and produced a set of spoons he had just bought, saying they were for strawberries and ice cream. At dessert, he wouldn't hear of any of us begging off. (He couldn't identify with dieters, which always provided me with an excuse to eat uncomplex carbohydrates.) He wanted us to taste the spoons, to feel the solidness of the scoop compared to the melting ice cream that filled it. We did as we were told (each for our own reasons). The spoons were left to sit on the plates, returning to his pocket, after a cursory wipe with his napkin, only when the waiter was clearing the way for coffee.

Wagstaff made his silver earn its keep; it was used, which was his way of drawing us into the excitement. I remember waiting and waiting for one Christmas dinner at his apartment, not because the food wasn't ready but because the silver vessel he had chosen for the stuffing had to be polished until it came up to par. This was in 1985, before he had amassed the approximately six hundred pieces that would eventually make up his collection, built largely in just over two years and cut off by his death in 1987. He would keep some of the objects lined up on the white floor of the living room in front of the windows, adding to the glamour of the view down to Fifth Avenue as it goes into Washington Square. Despite the chicness, some problem with air trapping had developed between the floorboards and the white linoleum. Walking around was like treading on Bubble Wrap, and the sound of popping would punctuate conversation. So at his place even the acoustics contributed to the Wagstaff electricity, the expectation that he would unwrap and reveal something amazing. I was never disappointed. In a way, it was permanent Christmas up there; but outside in the middle of nowhere he could give you this feeling too.

Many years ago a bunch of us were on the beach having a picnic. Sam decided to take a walk and disappeared into the distance. Sometime later we spotted him way up on the beach, heading back toward us. As he got closer, we spied these bizarre jumbled things dangling from both his hands. When he reached our temporary camp, he bent down, handing out his treasures, and said, "I've made you sandals and brought you something else to eat." Our Poseidon had collected bark, seaweed, beach plums, and other plants and found materials; he claimed some of it could be eaten, and the rest he had tied together into shoelike contraptions with bits of net and string.

This food he offered and these sandals he had made rendered it utterly clear that Sam Wagstaff couldn't stop collecting and that his compulsions were free from extrinsic notions of status. This isn't to say he was a socialist. He would go very high in the bidding. And this isn't to say that he didn't discriminate among people—but he argued with people's discriminations against certain materials. The point is that he particularly liked to choose the orphans of art, the stuff that hadn't quite been let into the pearly gates of fine art. Wagstaff never cared if others agreed with his choices—that was their right or, more accurately, their problem. Consensus wasn't his aim. He had a favorite free-spirit story, which goes along these lines: the art dealer Betty Parsons once asked some people what the difference was between cats and dogs and after hearing their answers gave her own—cats aren't afraid for their jobs. Nor was Wagstaff. His job was to get us to look.

In a fundamental way he put out-of-fashion American Victorian silver through the same regenerative process that he did the bark and string of our sandals that day on the beach. Silver had seemed to me a leftover, useless to the needs of modern life, all that polishing a pain in the neck. But because of Wagstaff's eyes I looked again. Many people did, and the history and pleasure of American silver made in the second half of the nineteenth century is once again a subject.

Sometimes I think his decision to collect these works, particularly silver of the 1870s and '80s, was like sending us a message in a bottle. As our decade spins in its fin de siècle mood, the analogies between then and now multiply, and the old objects become radically contemporary in the context of today's ornamentalism, stylism, decorativism, and, of course, our social Victorianism. Wagstaff did it again; he threw the light onto objects that were waiting for him as though in the wings. He is, in a roundabout way, responsible for yet another light turned on them—Robert Mapplethorpe's photographing some of them for this issue of HG. Silver is photography's elemental relative, and Wagstaff always wanted his friend Mapplethorpe to show the beauty in these things, usually considered ugly and scorned, as only a Mapplethorpe can do.

On January 20, 1989, the Sam Wagstaff Collection of American Silver goes up for sale at Christie's. Picture him sitting in the audience, shining as much as the pieces. ♠

Canyon Hideout

(Continued from page 124) eye for design," he adds.

Tanen at one time collected Art Nouveau and Art Deco, but he has given away those collections, as well as several others, to friends who appreciate them. One of these friends is screenwriter and director Joel Schumacher, with whom Tanen often trades objects. The two men share not only the same decorator—David James—but also a taste for things Southwestern and Mexican. "My entire Precolumbian collection is from Ned," Schumacher notes. "He has great taste." Schumacher maintains, however, that his own collections are far more modest than Tanen's. "I always tell him that my house looks like the gatekeeper's cottage compared with his."

Although he has had other collections that have come and gone, Tanen's enthusiasm for American Indian artifacts has never waned—nor has his taste for "primitive or folk art, usually with some sense of humor." That would explain the painted dancing chicken on the living room shelf or the Day of the Dead skeleton figure, wearing a sombrero and playing a trumpet, that inhabits a slot in the stone chimney.

His quirky approach to collecting has nothing to do with "what you think you ought to be looking at—it's about enjoyment." This attitude makes him something of a rarity in Hollywood, where a collector is born every minute and a collecting trend every fifteen. But then how many collectors number among their holdings over two hundred varieties of cactus—and why? Ned Tanen's answer is rather collectible itself: "I guess they remind me of me. Somewhat solitary—and bristly." ♠

Editor: Paul Sinclaire

Light of Provence

(Continued from page 106) or Jean-Baptiste Dumas, the nineteenth-century chemist, who my grandmother would've much preferred. Or it could be a Louis or Paul Dumas, just a nice plain farmer from Provence. You know, my name in French means of the farm. Mas means farm and *mas* combined with *du* is a name of this region. So I had the instant feeling that I came from here." In fact, he was born in Bryn Mawr and moved to Detroit when he was twelve. After serving in the navy during World War II, Dumas went to Hollywood and had bit parts in movies with Loretta Young, Van Johnson, Fredric March, and Florence Eldridge. Then he studied acting at the Neighborhood Playhouse in New York City, which led to a season of summer stock in Pennsylvania where he met his actress wife. And when his marriage ended in the early 1960s, he decided to go and live in Paris.

He likes his houses to be understated but nevertheless clearly stated—classically stylish but with a sense of humor. "I love bright colors—occasionally," says Dumas, who is wearing black jeans and a black sweatshirt over a bright pink tennis shirt, all from the Gap. "I like them now only as a touch, as a thing that lifts a dark color." He painted his swimming pool navy blue because the "water becomes the most beautiful sapphire, such a deep fathomless blue that you absolutely want to jump in." He used firebricks for the floors throughout the house and on the terrace because of their color—"a warm lobster bisque with lots of cream in it." But to change the rhythm, the bricks are laid out in different patterns. For instance, on the terrace they run on a bias, which takes your eye to the big view, and in the drawing room they run on straight lines, like stripes, exaggerating the length. He embedded a nineteenth-century terra-cotta fragment of a sculpture of Caesar on a wall in the loggia; he feels that Provence belongs to Caesar. "It's tough Roman country. Tough winters. Brutally hot summers. Extremes. In July and August you drop dead from the heat. Then until Christmas it's marvelous. Shirtsleeve weather. Dinner out. But February and March—run. Go anywhere you can because it can be miserable, rainy, cold.

"Always this idea of sweet little Provence. It ain't sweet. It's a tough life. There are working farmers who produce enormous amounts of fruit—melons, cherries, apples, peaches, pears, grapes. It has none of the glamour of the coast. The false glamour. No casinos. No nightclubs. Provence shows no signs of bursting with progress. That's what has kept it from being ruined."

Just when you think Dick Dumas has settled down, he turns around and starts another profession: "My real love now is designing furniture." He won the Roscoe Award for the outdoor furniture he designed to go under the big Picasso wall decorations at the Château de Castille near Uzès. His outdoor Gothic furniture, along with fabrics and china depicting his impressions of life in Provence, is being made in Europe by Sun House, and he's negotiating with an American company to produce a line of leather, wood, and steel Postmodern furniture designs. "I'm a jack-of-all-trades and—I hope—a master of the furniture trade."

He is certainly the master of his fourth house in Provence: "I think I'll never find another one like it. I doubt whether another spot exists where everything happens in such an extraordinary way. Those sunsets. The light. New York has great light. Paris has great light. Provence has superb light. There's a kind of light that's magic. Magic, magic, magic. And it's here in Provence." ♠

Editor: Marie-Paule Pellé

Roman Revival

(Continued from page 117) two doors, the left one leading into the kitchen, the right onto a staircase going up to the bathroom.

"The bathroom and kitchen are carved out of the narrow room that was once for the stable boys," explains Corey from the sofa with the accent of a native New Yorker. "The bookcase is an architectural disguise, like the antique device of not being able to see the next room."

If the apartment itself functions as a game of camouflage, so too do its contents. At first glance the rugs resemble Oriental carpets; instead they are woven hemp stenciled with colorful designs. The seventeenth-century desk has a writing surface made from rare *breccia di Sicilia* marble; the green serpentine marble on the dining room table is decidedly faux. The bookcase masquerades as Biedermeier; the Medici medallions imitate bronze. Even Juno is not as she seems: although her head is from the second century, she is a Roman chip on marble shoulders from the Renaissance.

"There is no date to a good object," says Magistretti. "I find it offensive to have a

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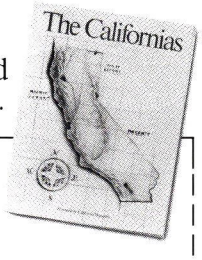

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Roman Revival

signed piece such as a Hermès ashtray or Lalique ware. I don't like decorative knickknacks." He defines knickknacks as useless clutter, a term that appeals to Corey's sense of humor. "I don't appreciate small scale," continues Magistretti with a voice as smooth as béchamel. "Rather than furnishings, I prefer to decorate with furniture."

Despite a marked affinity for seventeenth- and eighteenth-century furniture, Magistretti's apartment is an unspiked cocktail, a mixture of ingredients of studied nonchalance. The thronelike red chair, all plush and majestic, confronts the spinsterish Tyrolean dining chairs. The tub forms of armchairs upholstered in suede and elephant skin are echoed in a pair of terra-cotta garden seats from turn-of-the-century Florence. Twin English Regency candlesticks on the dining table salute the 1930s lamp by Alberto Gherardi, a cast-iron icon with a pair of blackbirds roosting under the shade, which gamely stands at attention nearby.

The white curtain that shields the main room from the front door billows in the breeze. A noisy group of people pass by walking toward Campo Marzio around the corner. In this square, on May 29, 1606, Caravaggio took part in a brawl that ended when he stabbed and killed his friend Ranuccio Tomassoni. Compared with the bustle and violent history of the streets outside, Magistretti's apartment is a refuge, a barrel-vaulted stronghold of restrained dignity. Meanwhile, the statue of Juno looks on. ♠

Editor: Marie-Paule Pellé

Vass Horizons

(Continued from page 62) She put together her vast two-story space in slightly more than a year, and claims she isn't finished yet.

The primary components of this house are light and air. High windows are barely encumbered by translucent white blinds—initially she had just the glass but discovered that neighbors were looking in. Kilims cover the bleached flooring. A Deco table is surrounded by institutional wood chairs. "Once upon a time all the furniture was modern. I am committed to my time, and I embrace the future," she avows. But gradually, other styles intruded—an early nineteenth century chair, old American pieces. She inherited furniture from her parents and had it reupholstered in Clarence House fabric.

Tall forms of wood—geometrically carved columns, a life-size Trojan horse with a hollow compartment for children to play in—break the space. A Baroque putto hangs in the central hall. Latin American animal masks protrude from the walls, plants drift out of corners and shelves, flowers bloom in abundance. Vass is a plant addict. Her rooftop greenhouse, built around an atrium, doubles as a skylight over the center of the loft. The terrace is a wilderness of trees, shrubs, and greenery. Squirrels climb up the fire escape and devour her strawberries. She is planning a garden of scents: rose, lemon, thyme, rue, rosemary, and lavender. At six in the morning she may be up watering, pruning, planting, repotting. The guest room is also on the roof. Futons line the walls under curved skylights without screens. Visitors have been known to sleep with goggles on. Dawn can be terrifying.

In the bedroom is an immense fluffy bed; in the bathroom a freestanding porcelain tub from which the Empire State Building is visible. In a cabinet—actually a pie safe, to cool pastry, from New Mexico—is a reef of shells, scallops, winkles, conchs, coral, all arranged by shape and size. Vass is a collector. In another pie safe is her cache of ceramics, china, majolica, and ironstone acquired at flea markets and secondhand shops, or as gifts from family and friends.

Her favorite collection is of 1939 World's Fair memorabilia: rings, penknives, a thimble, whistle, matchbooks, silverware, glasses, and plates, all with the trylon and perisphere languidly displayed. "The fair changed my life," she confesses. "I saw modern art, modern architecture. It set me on the road to being a lover of my own times, to being for the world of tomorrow, and, of necessity, to learning about the world of the past."

She does not eschew delight. "I like the best of everything. I'm very catholic in my taste." Then, the inevitable reconsideration: "Probably people think my taste is dreadful." But they cannot question her enthusiasm. "The world abounds with wonderful stuff, jazz, Bach, books, painting, sculpture." Vass, needless to say, likes clothes. A walk-in closet as big as a living room has racks with upper and lower levels—she got the idea from painter's scaffolds—and shelves that climb up the walls to the ceiling. Her taste in people is rigorous. "I like my children. They're good citizens. They have opinions about almost everything. I'm sick of people without opinions. It means they haven't thought." ♠ *Editor: Paul Sinclaire*

On Audubon Place

(Continued from page 97) sweep are rooms that soothe, rooms where beige melts into cream melts into ivory melts into the lightest wash of gold. A note for purists: nothing is irreversible since the paint can be stripped, and most of the original architectural detailing of the house has been removed.

Holden's neutral backgrounds are deceptively plain; in fact, they require considerable time and effort. Walls get skimmed and then glazed. Floors get pickled and subtly stenciled. Ceilings are sometimes papered, even when the walls are not. In essence, there is nothing easy about achieving this easy-looking style.

Relying on such a simple treatment also means that each piece is that much more important—which is why the inexpensive canvas is covering the fine French chairs. And why the sitting room curtains are simple but made of exquisite Scalamandré silk. And the Piranesi prints and architectural ornaments stand out as a brilliant counterpoint.

Holden's approach is very modern for a very traditional city. "I think if I lived in New York or Los Angeles, my rooms would be more conservative. There's so much trendy stuff there to react against." But here, where Holden was born and raised, she and Ann Dupuy keep trying to push themselves a little further. "We're influenced by everything. We see the things that Philippe Starck is doing, and we think, Well, maybe we'll use them. We never do, but we always think we will. We are getting braver," she adds. "We're getting more contemporary." But only in the easiest possible way. ♠

Editor: Babs Simpson

Out Back in Australia

(Continued from page 131) I think they're great. What really impressed me about Monet's garden at Giverny was the use of trailing nasturtiums. I always put them in about late November, and they build up into monstrous lumps that curl and twist all over the place."

There's not a semblance of order in this garden. Geddes has mixed up the gold, red, and tangerine geums—"which sounds horrible," he says, "but is actually wonderful. And during the early spring you get great flashes of white broom—which grows naturally here—with colored ranunculus coming through a blanket of forget-me-nots. It's really fantastic."

As Geddes's stock of knowledge expands, so, too, does the garden. Already, he's constructing dry retaining walls of local stone to accommodate new beds by the river. "I don't want to need teams of gardeners, but things can be organized—especially with a cottage garden, which can ramble a bit and self-seed. I'll do it slowly. I have vegetables among the flowers now, but I'd love to have a pure little vegetable garden. And beds of things that propagate themselves madly, such as forget-me-nots and cosmos."

Whether extolling the prodigious performance of the delphiniums ("I think we could break the world record, heightwise anyway") or the surprise of a "great pile of lobelia bursting out," Geddes expresses total enthusiasm for his garden. "You have a responsibility to leave things behind," he says, "to create something really beautiful." ♠

Gentleman's Quarters

(Continued from page 81) Fallon got them all in a junk shop. There's also a study for a nude by a woman named Conkling and an enormous abstract by Fallon himself, who needed something big for his previous apartment. And all over are objects to pick up, put down, smile over, and say, "Where on earth did you ever find this?"

Fallon likes what he calls "funny little American Impressionist things," which is why there is another Terrell on the paisley-skirted table in his bedroom, right next to a box covered with tobacco leaves. A painting of Boston Harbor, which was done in 1900 by a young man named Walter Appleton Clark who died tragically, and portraits of two old men—"they just appealed to me"—hang by the marquetry bed. Maybe the people who painted these, Terrell too, will turn out to be wildly famous someday, but then who cares? Fallon certainly doesn't. He just buys what he likes.

Places like Tom Fallon's are misleading because all that casual disarray looks artless. Artless indeed! It takes as much skill to arrange this amiable clutter as it does to dispose a Dunand vase, a Ruhlmann chest of drawers, and a single calla lily about an otherwise empty room. In truth, it may take more. ♠

Editor: Mary Emmerling

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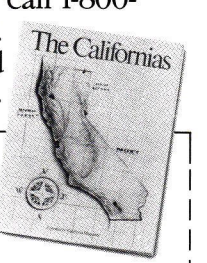

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Sources

STYLE
Page 28 Mid 19th century umbrella stand, $2,450, at James II Galleries, NYC (212) 355-7040. Hunting whip with thong, $250, horn-handled walking stick, $147.50, at M. J. Knoud, NYC (212) 838-1434. Horse-head cane, $1,500, dog-head cane, $850, at Hoffman-Gampetro, NYC (212) 755-1120. Umbrella, $380, at Prada, NYC (212) 308-2332. Vermont bluestone console with antelope legs, $855, at Modern Stone Age, NYC (212) 966-2570. Horn chair, $3,750, COM to the trade at Circa David Barrett, NYC; Threlkeld/Schliemon, Atlanta; Rozmallin, Chicago; Vivian Watson, Dallas; Todd Wiggins, Dania, Miami; Frederick Miley, Washington, D.C. Jeu de Cartes bouclé cotton and polyester fabric, 51" wide, $108 yd, to the trade at Clarence House, NYC, Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, Philadelphia, Portland, San Francisco, Seattle, Troy. Scottish silver-tipped snuff mull, $2,000, at Hoffman-Gampetro (see above). **29** Rupestrian cotton fabric designed by Miguel Angel Morales, 58 ½" wide, approx $30 yd, to the trade at Cedro Decoracion, Madrid 532-04-85. Ará chrome lamp designed by Philippe Starck, $480, for FLOS, for dealers call (516) 549-2745. Raj cotton fabric designed by Timney-Fowler, 48" wide, $78 yd, to the trade at Christopher Hyland, NYC (212) 688-6121. Horn buttons, $3.50–$6, at Tender Buttons, NYC (212) 758-7004.

DESIGN
Pages 30, 32 Robert Venturi's Queen Anne chair, $1,468, Richard Meier's Meier chair, $4,299, to the trade at Knoll International, NYC, Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, Minneapolis, Philadelphia, Phoenix, St. Louis, San Francisco, Seattle, Washington, D.C. Mario Bellini's Cab armchair, $1,745, to the trade at Atelier International, Long Island City, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C. Mario Botta's Latonda chair, $565, and Prima chair, $945, Philippe Starck's Dr. Sonderbar, $895, Pat Conley, $715, and Richard III, $1,815, to the trade at ICF, for nearest showroom or representative call (212) 750-0900. Olivier Gagnere's Stacking chair, $510, to the trade at Stendig International, NYC, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, Washington, D.C. René-Jean Caillette's RJC chair, $150, at Furniture of the Twentieth Century, NYC (212) 929-6023. Mark Zeff's Victoria chair, $175, at Barneys New York, NYC (212) 929-9000. Linus Corraggio's Hammer and Sickle chair, $525, at Furniture of the Twentieth Century (see above).

ANTIQUES
Pages 46–47 American Jacquard coverlets are available from the following dealers: CONNECTICUT Melinda Ventre, 26 Keeler Ave., Norwalk, CT 06854, (203) 866-1833; Maria & Peter Warren Antiques, 1030 Ridgefield Rd., Wilton, CT 06897, (203) 762-7353. DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA G. K. S. Bush, 2828 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20007, (202) 965-0653; Cherishables Antiques, 1608 20 St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20009, (202) 785-4087; Marston Luce, 1314 21 St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20036, (202) 775-9460. GEORGIA Deanne D. Levison American Antiques, 2995 Lookout Pl., Atlanta, GA 30302, (404) 264-0106. NEW JERSEY Fourscore and More, Box 611, Boonton, NJ 07005, (201) 335-2284. NEW YORK America Hurrah, 766 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10021, (212) 535-1930; Marna Anderson, 333 Rector Pl. #14, New York, NY 10280, (212) 945-8484; Cora Ginsburg, 819 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10021, (212) 744-1352; Hirschl & Adler Folk, 851 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10021, (212) 988-3655; Jay Johnson America's Folk Heritage Gallery, 1044 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10021, (212) 628-7280; Ronald and Norma Keno, RD 1, Box 391, Mohawk, NY 13407, (315) 866-1055; Kelter-Malcé Antiques, 361 Bleecker St., New York, NY 10014, (212) 989-6760. PENNSYLVANIA Four Centuries, 122 East Main St., Lititz, PA 17543, (717) 627-2101; Connie Hayes, RD Box 134, Belleville, PA 17004, (717) 935-5125; Old Hope Antiques, 6465 Rte. 202, New Hope, PA 18938, (215) 862-5055.

COLLECTING
Page 55 Artist who painted the fish on staircase: Ann Spinks, 419 High St., Methil, Leven, Fife KY8 3QP, Scotland.

VASS HORIZONS
Pages 60–61 Tibet cotton fabric (on ottoman), 50" wide, $118.50 yd, to the trade at Clarence House (see Sources for pg 28). **64–65** Black-and-white stacking chairs by Rainer Schell from Schlapp-Möbel America, $217 ea, for dealers call (312) 406-1700. **66–67** Decorative painting by Karen Lukas, NYC (212) 431-8164. **68–69** Rayure Valencia jute and fibranne fabric (on armchair), 49" wide, $45 yd, and Velours Irelande linen and cotton fabric (on headboard), 51" wide, $129 yd, both to the trade at Clarence House (see above).

THE ROYALTON TREATMENT
Pages 70–71 18-kt gold earrings with amethyst and citrine stones, at Bulgari, Hotel Pierre, NYC (212) 486-0086. Montblanc Masterpiece fountain pen, $295, for dealers call (800) 631-7646. Black leather agenda book, $315, at Bottega Veneta, NYC, Beverly Hills, Chicago, San Francisco. Green calfskin Filofax book, $180, at fine stores. Swing coat with gauntlet cuffs of wild-type lunaraine mink designed by Karl Lagerfeld, special order at Bloomingdale's, NYC; Saks Fifth Avenue, NYC; I. Magnin, Chicago; Harris Furs, Providence; Nordstrom, San Francisco; Garfinkel's, Washington, D.C. Brown crocodile handbag, $3,950, at Prada, NYC (212) 308-2332. Harley sunglasses by 1.a. Eyeworks, $120, at Morgenthal-Frederics Opticians, NYC (212) 838-3090. **72–73** Horn sconces designed by Philippe Starck, to order at Daum Boutique, 694 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10021. Men's burgundy cashmere robe, $1,850, at Cashmere-Cashmere, NYC, Chicago, Short Hills. Honey-colored crocodile address book, $750, at SusanBennisWarrenEdwards, NYC (212) 755-4197. **75** Giorgio Armani double-breasted shawl-collared dinner suit, $1,695, rounded wing-collar tuxedo shirt, $295, at Giorgio Armani, NYC, Chicago, Los Angeles. 18-kt gold cuff links with onyx and diamonds, $2,200, at Bulgari, Hotel Pierre (see above). 18-kt gold Rolex Oyster Perpetual Day-Date watch with President bracelet, available at an official Rolex jeweler. Gold-and-steel alarm clock, at Bulgari, Hotel Pierre (see above). Right Time black suede shoes, $405, at SusanBennisWarrenEdwards (see above). Table/Vase, designed by Philippe Starck, to order at Daum Boutique (see above).

CHEF'S SPECIAL
Page 90 Teakettle designed by Michael Graves for Alessi, $120, Shanghai crystal vase, $135, at D. F. Sanders, NYC (212) 925-9040. **92** China mug designed by Robert Venturi for Swid Powell, $50 (set of 4; matching place setting available), at Bloomingdale's, NYC (212) 705-2000. Notebook hand towel, $18, at D. F. Sanders (see above).

ON AUDUBON PLACE
Page 95 Shirred Stripe taffeta and rep silk curtain fabric, 50" wide, $184 yd, Directoire striped cotton-and-silk curtain taffeta, 50" wide, $134 yd, to the trade at Scalamandré, NYC, Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Houston, Laguna Niguel, Los Angeles, Miami, Minneapolis, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Seattle, Washington, D.C.

IN THE LIGHT OF PROVENCE
Page 102 Souleiado tablecloth cotton fabrics, 50" wide, $30 yd, to special order at Pierre Deux, NYC (212) 570-9343. **106** Souleiado's Fête de France cotton fabric, 50" wide, $30 yd, at Pierre Deux (see above).

ROMAN REVIVAL
Pages 114–115, 117 Turkish sofa, $5,000, red sofa, $7,000, hemp-stenciled carpet, 3 by 4 m, $1,800–$2,000, 2 by 3 m, $1,000–$1,800 (custom colors), to custom order along with other Adriano Magistretti and Thomas Corey designs, to the trade through Pediment Design, NYC (212) 246-5189.

CANYON HIDEOUT
Pages 120–125 Most Navajo rugs and blankets, Southwest pottery and artifacts from Doug Babbitt, Fort Worth (817) 244-7820. **120** First Cabin patio furniture by Kipp Stewart for Summit Furniture, to the trade at Summit Furniture, San Francisco; Jerry Pair, Atlanta, Miami; Ostrer House, Boston; Holly Hunt, Chicago, Minneapolis; David Sutherland, Dallas, Houston; Blake House, Denver; Blake House Laguna, Laguna Niguel, Janus et Cie, Los Angeles; Luten Clarey Stern, NYC; Duncan & Huggins, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C.; Wayne Martin, Portland; Price/Ragen, Seattle. **124** Chevron sisal carpet, $26 yd, to the trade at Decorative Carpets, Los Angeles (213) 657-8840.

PLAYING WITH FIRE
Pages 132–137 Wooden mantels, $195–$4,000 ea, from Readybuilt Products, Baltimore (301) 233-5833. Hand-painted by Sara Nesbitt, Hoboken, NJ (201) 792-3127. **132–133** Ballroom Satin silk and cotton fabric, 52" wide, $145 yd, to the trade at Scalamandré (see Sources for pg 29). Louis XV chinoiserie clock at Bernard Steinitz et Fils, NYC (212) 832-3711. Sheffield beaker at Joel Mathieson, NYC (212) 966-7332. Blow-poke, $75, and antique Louis XVI andirons, $3,400, at William H. Jackson, NYC (212) 753-9400. **134–135** Riviera cotton stripe, 54" wide, $28.50 yd, to the trade at Quadrille Wallpapers and Fabrics, NYC (212) 753-2995. Flamant bronze head, $14,000, and Kazimir Malevich silver teapot, $3,400, at Primavera Gallery, NYC (212) 288-1569. Anasazi arrowhead olla pot by Bill Greer, $750, from Wallengren USA, NYC (212) 966-2266. Grecian-design Spode plate, $360, 19th-century French stone garden spheres, $375–$500 ea, and 18th-century carved-wood finials, $1,650 pr, to the trade at J. Garvin Mecking, NYC (212) 677-4316. Bernice desk lamp, $330, at D. F. Sanders (see above). Portrait by Herb Ritts, $1,000, at Staley-Wise Gallery, NYC (212) 777-1590. Fire tools, $325, from Sointu, NYC (212) 570-9449. William IV Bristol glass bowl, $265, at James II Galleries (see above). **135** Diego Giacometti andirons, $30,000, at A. Smith Antiques, NYC (212) 888-6337. **136** New York woven twill silk plaid, 57" wide, $195 yd, to the trade at Christopher Hyland, NYC (212) 688-6121. Pair of horse paintings, $825 ea, and inlaid mirror, $2,800, to the trade at John Rosselli, NYC (212) 737-2252. Gothic castle model, c. 1835, $1,650 pr, to the trade at J. Garvin Mecking (see above). Pair of Georgian mahogany candlesticks with brass bobeches, $1,825, carpet balls, $165–$200 ea, at James II Galleries (see above). Fender, $9,500, and poker, $950, at Stair & Co., NYC (212) 517-4400. George III wood and brass bucket, $10,000 pr, at Florian Papp, NYC (212) 288-6770. **137** Rayure Pichet cotton fabric, 51" wide, $66 yd, to the trade at Clarence House (see Sources for pg 28). George III silver cups and covers, $40,000 pr, at Janet Mavec, NYC (212) 517-8822. Regency candelabra, $15,000 pr, at James II Galleries (see above). 18th-century family portrait, $9,500, at Vito Giallo, NYC (212) 535-9885. Tongs and shovel at William H. Jackson (see above). Brass andirons, $1,500, at Stair & Co. (see above). La Villageoise cotton toile, to the trade at Brunschwig

& Fils, NYC, Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Dania, Denver, Houston, Laguna Niguel, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, San Fancisco, Seattle, Troy, Washington, D.C. American Victorian fireboard, $4,500, at J. Garvin Mecking (see above). Tramp Art clock, $900, to the trade at Limited Editions, NYC (212) 249-5563. English brass fender, $650, to the trade at Danny Alessandro/Edwin Jackson, NYC (212) 421-1928. Fire tools, andirons at William H. Jackson (see above). Basket of wheat, $350, at Pierre Deux, NYC (212) 570-9343. Victorian shell sconces, c. 1865, $3,250, George III brass candlesticks, $985 pr, glass-and-silver match holder, $1,850, at James II Galleries (see above).

SAMPLES

Page 138 Fireplace tools are available from the following blacksmiths and dealers: **Blacksmiths** ARIZONA Burnham-Kidwell Metalsmithing, 3661 Abrigo Rd., Golden Valley Star Rte., Kingman, AZ 86401, (602) 565-3796; Brian Hughes/Jalapeño Forge, 426 Beach Ave., Prescott, AZ, 86303, (602) 778-6251; Art Ironworks, 9235 North Tenth Dr., Phoenix, AZ 85021, (602) 997-0242. CALIFORNIA Chris Axelson/Viking Forge, 3680 The Barnyard, Carmel, CA 93923, (408) 624-3909; Michael Bondi Metal Design, 1818 Shorey St., Oakland, CA 94607, (415) 763-1327; Daniel Dole, Blacksmith, 1101 Tenth St., Berkeley, CA 94710, (415) 524-4728; Toby Hickman/Waylan Smithy, 6030 Roblar Rd., Petaluma, CA 94952, (707) 664-8910; Joe Koches, 455 Main St., Ferndale, CA 95536, (707) 786-4216; CONNECTICUT The Essex Forge, Old Dennison Rd., Essex, CT 06426, (203) 767-1808. GEORGIA Ivan Bailey Metal Studio, 1260 Foster St., NW, Atlanta, GA 30318, (404) 355-3640. MASSACHUSETTS Ned James, 65 Canal St., Turners Falls, MA 01376, (413) 863-8388; Bruce Johnson, Marshall Mills Rd., Ashburnham, MA 01430, (508) 827-4774. MISSOURI Austin's Iron Works, 44 NE 69 Hwy., Kansas City, MO 64119, (816) 454-7736; Jerry Hoffmann, Rte. 1, Box 189, Lonedell, MO 63060, (314) 629-4061. MONTANA Jeffrey Funk/River Bend Forge, 280 River Bend Rd., Big Fork, MT 59911, (406) 837-4208. NEW HAMPSHIRE David Court, Bay Hill Rd., Northfield, NH 03276, (603) 286-3097; Elements of Steel, 32 North Main St., New Market, NH 03857, (603) 659-2595; Winnepesaukee Forge, RFD #1, Little Road, Box 1024 Meredith, NH 03253, (603) 279-5492. NEW MEXICO Northridge Forge, 206 Burro Ave., Box 753, Cloudcroft, NM 88317, (505) 682-2897. Patrick Porter/Cottonwood Forge, Box 388, Tesuque, NM 87574, (505) 988-4607; NEW YORK James Garvey Studio, 153 Franklin St., New York, NY 10013-2915, (212) 431-8424; Schwartz's Forge & Metalworks, Box 205, Forge Hollow Rd., Deansboro, NY 13328, (315) 841-4477. NORTH CAROLINA Joseph Anderson, 116 Smith St., Walnut Cove, NC 27052, (919) 591-3562; Custom Blacksmith Shop, Box 146, Hwy. 221, Linville Falls, NC 28647, (704) 765-6226; Ira DeKoven, 5820 Davis Rd., Box 1041, Walkertown, NC 27051, (919) 744-0067; Kayne & Son Custom Forged Hardware, 76 Daniel Ridge Rd., Candler, NC 28715, (704) 667-8868. PENNSYLVANIA Peter Renzetti, The Arden Forge, 301 Brintons Bridge Rd., West Chester, PA 19382, (215) 399-1530; Will Stone, Penns Creek Rd., Coburn, PA 16832, (814) 349-8232. TEXAS Lars Stanley, Box 3095, Austin, TX 78764, (512) 445-0444. VERMONT Robert Bourdon, RD 2, Box 2180, Wolcott, VT 05680, (802) 472-6508; Ian Eddy—Blacksmith, RFD 1, Box 213, Sandhill Rd., Putney, VT 05346, (802) 387-5991; Elephant Hill Iron Works, RR 1, Box 168, Tunbridge, VT 05077, (802) 889-9444; Forged Art, Rte. 25, West Topsham, VT 05086, (802) 439-5275; Ploughshare Forge, RD #1, Box 1208, Plainfield, VT 05667, (802) 426-3722; West Village Forge, Box 2114, Marlboro Rd., West Brattleboro, VT 05301, (802) 254-2400. VIRGINIA White Oak Forge, Box 341, The Plains, VA 22171, (703) 253-5269; Woods Creek Forge, 223 McLaughlin St., Lexington, VA 24450, (703) 463-6632. **Dealers** CALIFORNIA Territory, 6907½ Melrose Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90038, (213) 937-4006; Wilder Place, 7975½ Melrose Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90046, (213) 655-9072. DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA Cathedral Galleries, The Foxhall Square Mall, 3301 New Mexico Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20016, (202) 363-6936. INDIANA Conner Prairie Museum Shop, 13400 Allisonville Rd., Noblesville, IN 46060, (317) 776-6000. MASSACHUSETTS Lemee's Fireplace Equipment, 815 Bedford St., Bridgewater, MA 02324, (508) 697-2672; Period Furniture Hardware, Box 314, Charles St. Station, 123 Charles St., Boston, MA 02114, (617) 227-0758; Renovators Supply, Millers Falls, MA 01349, (413) 659-2211 (mail order). NEW YORK Danny Alessandro/Edwin Jackson, 307 East 60 St., New York, NY 10022, (212) 421-1928; Historic Housefitters, Farm to Market Rd., Brewster, NY 10509, (914) 278-2427 (mail order); William H. Jackson, 3 East 47 St., New York, NY 10017, (212) 753-9400; Luten Clarey Stern, 1059 Third Ave., New York, NY 10021, (212) 838-6420 (trade only); Florian Papp, 962 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10021, (212) 288-6770; Stair & Co., 942 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10021, (212) 517-4400. OKLAHOMA Vernita King, Nichols Hills Plaza North, 6480 Avondale Dr., Oklahoma City, OK 73116, (405) 843-5664. VERMONT Vermont Industries, Box 301, Rte. 103, Cuttingsville, VT 05738, (800) 826-4766. VIRGINIA Colonial Williamsburg, 201 Fifth Ave., Williamsburg, VA 23185, (800) 446-9240 In Virginia (804) 220-7463; Plow & Hearth, 560 Main St., Madison, VA 22727, (800) 527-5247.

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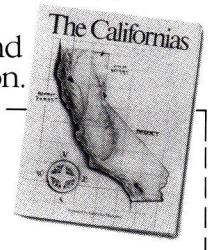

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GANDEE AT LARGE

Confessions of a furniture junkie— or fear and loathing in Milan

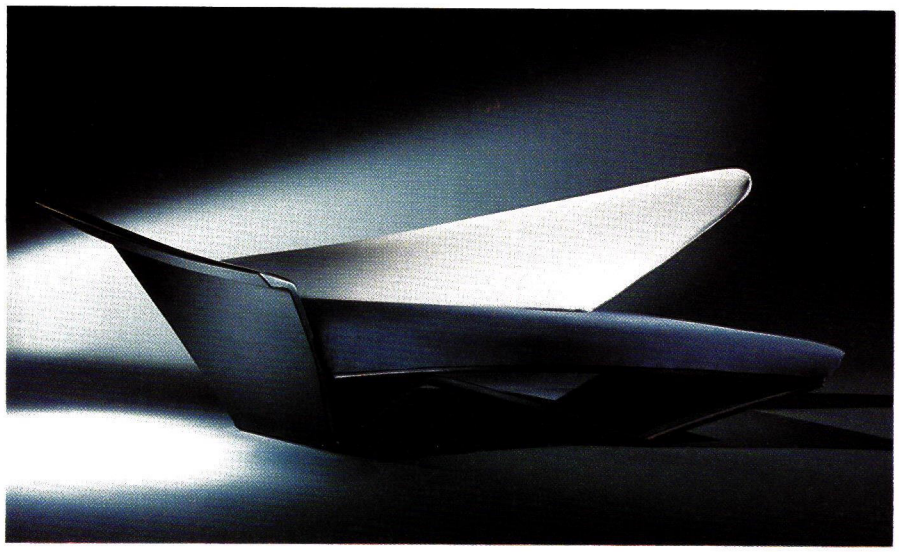
Maybe I should be ashamed. Maybe it's a sign of some bourgeois flaw in my character. But I have a tendency to look at furniture with a personal rather than professional eye. Although I'm not really in the market for anything in particular these days, something happens when I enter one of those to-the-trade-only showrooms. I forget my role as dispassionate critic. I abandon myself to naked covetousness. I am gripped with the uncontrollable urge to consume, to acquire, to possess.

Strolling through the design centers of Chicago, Cologne, London, Los Angeles, and New York over the years, I have vicariously refurnished my humble two-room Manhattan apartment a thousand times. Eyeing the goods at Artemide, Atelier International, Écart, and Knoll, I picture myself at home—seated in this or that chair, having dinner at this or that table, relaxing with my feet up on this or that ottoman.

So the prospect of joining 135,405 other interested parties from 126 countries at the 28th Salone del Mobile di Milano filled me with indescribable joy. Never mind the 8,008-mile round-trip flight, the $310 per night hotel room, the wear and tear on my most sensible shoes. For a furniture fanatic, the annual Milan furniture fair is nothing short of Mecca. After all, where else on this good earth can a man watch 2,138 exhibitors from 27 countries strut their sofas?

As might be expected, I hit the fairground running—determined to check off as many of the names listed in the official 1,066-page *catalogo generale* as four days would allow. But when it was all over, I was filled with a bittersweet sadness. Because nothing I saw brought back that old familiar "I want it and I want it bad" feeling. In other words, I never once found myself indulging in that perennially favorite daydream—the one where I'm the sultan of Brunei and I'm shopping for seven empty houses on four continents.

It's not that there wasn't plenty to see in Milan this year. There most certainly was. But call me old-fashioned, a shaky little chair constructed of laminated glass shards is not the sort of thing my furniture fantasies are made of. Nor are three-legged dining chairs that punish me for my lack of poise by hurling me to the floor. Nor are chaise longues made of guaranteed-to-rip-my-suit metal.



Hadid's Wavy Back sofa is problematic. It's hard even to stay on the thing

Nonetheless, such contemporary furniture masterpieces and their inexplicably proud authors created quite a stir in Milan. For example, fifteen hundred people got all dressed up late one night to attend the unveiling of three sofas and a coffee table by Zaha Hadid. Although I will be the first to admit that the London-based Baghdad-born designer is possessed of a wondrous architectural vision, I'm worried about her future as a furniture designer. For my thirteen million six hundred thousand lire, her boomerang-shaped *Star Wars*–style Wavy Back sofa is somewhat problematic. It's difficult, as a matter of fact, even to stay on the thing. Maybe George Jetson knows something I don't.

I also couldn't help but notice that the countless magazines covering the fair appeared more interested in photographing Nigel Coates than Nigel Coates's furniture collection. Perhaps because the British architect is so obliging: one day he patiently posed in a baby-blue shirt with big white stars all over it, another day he was decked out for the cameras in a pair of shorts. The little wooden stools he was introducing paled by comparison.

But Milan, say the sophisticates, is not necessarily about shopping for furniture: "How prosaic, how naive, how provincial, how crass." It's about breaking new aesthetic ground, it's about charting new stylistic directions, it's about spotting new trends in design. Maybe. But isn't it also about furniture? I worry. Although it's fun and exciting to break new ground, chart new directions, and spot new trends, it's also exhausting. After a long day in the trenches of design, a guy may in fact be so exhausted that he might like to sit down. And not on bad sculpture.

Louise Nevelson, speaking of sculpture, once said that she didn't want her furniture to be too comfortable because she didn't want people "parked in the living room." It's a pity Nevelson is no longer with us. She would have had a field day in Milan. I, on the other hand, did not. Maybe next year.

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